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IN THE CLOSED ROOM

BY

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AUTHOR OF "LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

PART ONE

IN the fierce airless heat of the small square room the child Judith panted as she lay on her bed. Her father and mother slept near her, drowned in the heavy slumber of workers after their day's labor. Some people in the next flat were quarreling, irritated probably by the appalling heat and their miserable helplessness against it. All the hot emanations of the sun-baked city streets seemed to combine with their clamor and unrest, and rise to the flat in which the child lay gazing at the darkness. It was situated but a few feet from the track of the Elevated Railroad and existence seemed to pulsate to the rush and roar of the demon which swept past the windows every few minutes. No one knew that Judith held the thing in horror, but it was a truth that she did. She was only seven years old, and at that age it is not easy to explain oneself so that older people can understand. She could only have said "I hate it. It comes so fast. It is always coming. It makes a sound as if thunder was quite close. I can never get away from it." The children in the other flats rather liked it. They hung out of the window perilously to watch it thunder past and to see the people who crowded it pressed close together in the seats, standing in the aisles, hanging on to the straps. Sometimes in the evening there were people in it who were going to the theater, and the women and girls were dressed in light colors and wore hats covered with white feathers and flowers. At such times the children were delighted, and Judith used to hear the three in the next flat calling out to each other, "That's *my* lady! That's *my* lady! That one's mine!"

Judith was not like the children in the other flats. She was a frail, curious creature, with silent ways and a soft voice and eyes. She liked to play by herself in a corner of the room and to talk to herself as she played. No one knew what she talked about, and in fact no one inquired. Her mother was always too busy. When she was not making men's coats by the score at the whizzing sewing machine, she was hurriedly preparing a meal which was always in danger of being late. There was the breakfast, which might not be ready in time for her husband to reach his "shop" when the whistle blew; there was the supper, which might not be in time to be in waiting for him when he returned in the evening.

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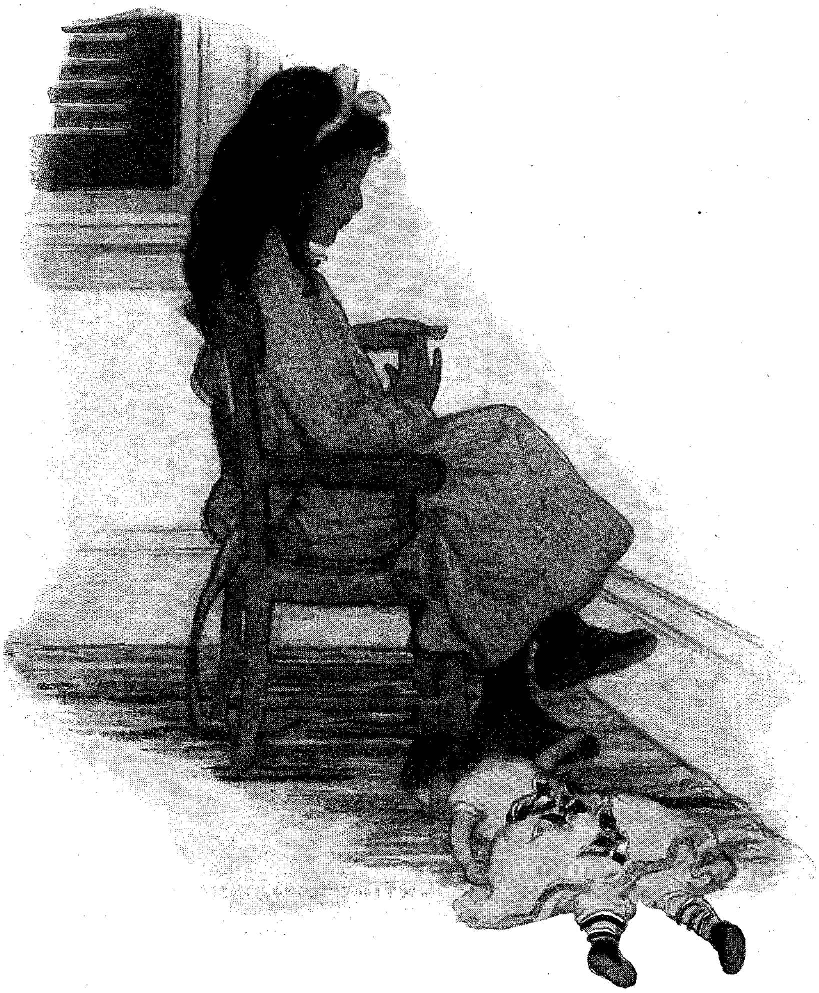


"*she often sat curving her small long fingers backward and talking to herself about Aunt Hester*"

The midday meal was a trifling matter, needing no special preparation. One ate anything one could find left from supper or breakfast.

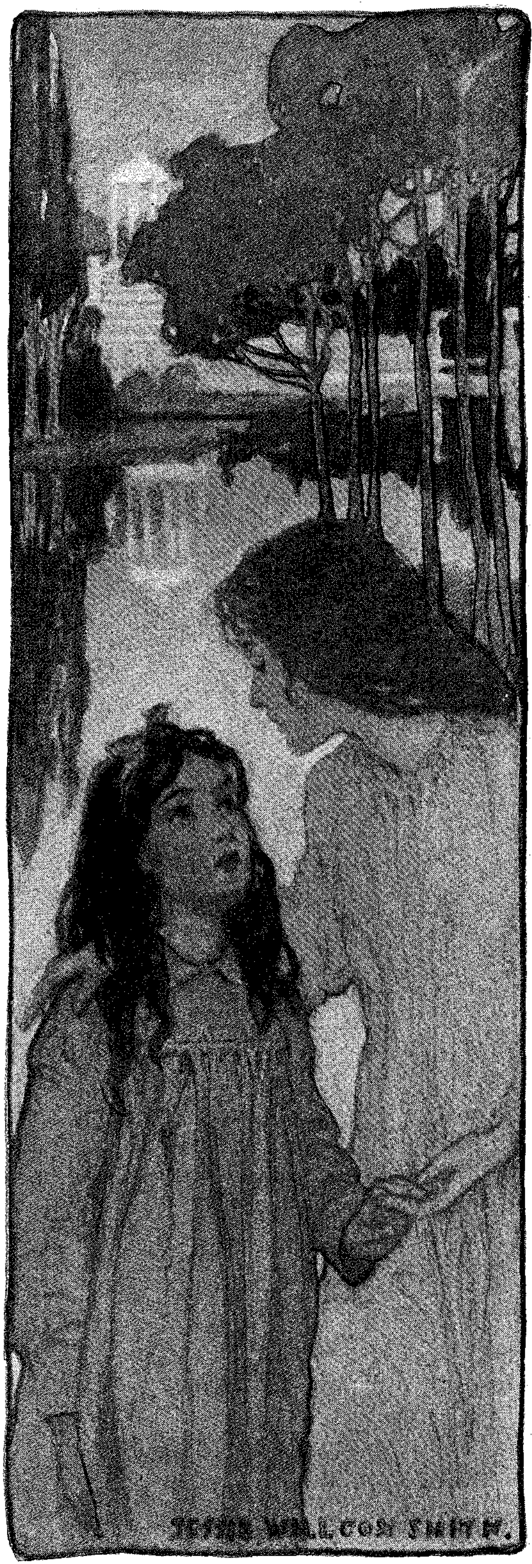
Judith's relation to her father and mother was not a very intimate one. They were too hard worked to have time for domestic intimacies, and a feature of their acquaintance was that though neither of them was sufficiently articulate to have found expression for the fact—the young man and woman felt the child vaguely remote. Their affection for her was tinged with something indefinitely like reverence. She had been a lovely baby with a peculiar magnolia whiteness of skin and very large, sweetly smiling eyes of dark blue, fringed with quite black lashes. She had exquisite pointed fingers and slender feet, and though Mr. and Mrs. Foster were—perhaps fortunately—unaware of it, she had been not at all the baby one would have expected to come to life in a corner of the hive of a workman's flat a few feet from the Elevated Railroad.

"Seems sometimes as if somehow she couldn't be mine," Mrs. Foster said at times. "She ain't like me, an' she ain't like Jem Foster, Lord knows. She ain't like none of either of our families I've ever heard of—'ceptin' it might be her Aunt Hester—but *she* died long before I was born. I've only heard mother tell about her. She was a awful pretty girl. Mother said she had that kind of lily-white complexion and long slender fingers that was so supple she could curl 'em back like they was double jointed.

Her eyes was big and had eyelashes that stood out round 'em, but they was brown. Mother said she wasn't like any other kind of girl, and she thinks Judith may turn out like her. She wasn't but fifteen when she died. She never was ill in her life—but one morning she didn't come down to breakfast, and when they went up to call her, there she was sittin' at her window restin' her chin on her hand, with her face turned up smilin' as if she was talkin' to some one. The doctor said it had happened hours before, when she had come to the window to look at the stars. Easy way to go, wasn't it?"

Judith had heard of her Aunt Hester, but she only knew that she herself had hands like her and that her life had ended when she was quite young. Mrs. Foster was too much occupied by the strenuousness of life to dwell upon the passing of souls. To her the girl Hester seemed too remote to appear quite real. The legends of her beauty and unlikeness to other girls seemed rather like a sort of romance.

As she was not aware that Judith hated the Elevated Railroad, so she was not aware that she was fond of the far away Aunt Hester with the long-pointed fingers which could curl backwards. She did not know that when she was playing in her corner of the room, where it was her way to sit on her little chair with her face turned towards the wall, she often sat curving her small long fingers backward and talking to herself about Aunt Hester. But this—as well as many other things—was true. It was not secretiveness which caused the child to refrain from speaking of certain things. She herself could not have explained the reasons for her silence; also it had never occurred to her that explanation and reasons were necessary. Her mental attitude was that of a child who, knowing a certain language, does not speak it to those who have never heard and are wholly ignorant of it. She knew her Aunt Hester as her mother did not. She had seen her often in her dreams and had a secret fancy that she could dream of her when she wished to do so. She was very fond of dreaming of her. The places where she came upon Aunt Hester were strange and lovely places where the air one breathed smelled like flowers and everything was lovely in a new way, and when one moved one felt so light that movement was delightful, and when one wakened one had not quite got over the lightness and for a few


JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH.

"The places where she came upon Aunt Hester were strange and lovely"

moments felt as if one would float out of bed.

The healthy, vigorous young couple who were the child's parents were in a healthy, earthly way very fond of each other. They had made a genuine love match and had found it satisfactory. The young mechanic Jem Foster had met the young shop-girl Jane Hardy at Coney Island one summer night and had become at once enamored of her shop-girl good looks and high spirits. They had married as soon as Jem had had the "raise" he was anticipating and had from that time lived with much harmony in the flat building by which the Elevated train rushed and roared every few minutes through the day and a greater part of the night. They themselves did not object to the "Elavated"; Jem was habituated to uproar in the machine shop, in which he spent his days, and Jane was too much absorbed in the making of men's coats by the dozens to observe anything else. The pair had healthy appetites and slept well after their day's work, hearty supper, long cheerful talk, and loud laughter over simple common joking.

"She's a queer little fish, Judy," Jane said to her husband as they sat by the open window one night, Jem's arm curved comfortably around the young woman's waist as he smoked his pipe. "What do you think she says to me to-night after I put her to bed?"

"Search *me!*" said Jem oracularly.

Jane laughed.

"'Why,' she says, 'I wish the Elevated train would stop.'

"'Why?' says I.

"'I want to go to sleep,' says she. 'I'm going to dream of Aunt Hester.'"

"What does she know about her Aunt Hester," said Jem. "Who's been talkin' to her?"

"Not me," Jane said. "She don't know nothing but what she's picked up by chance. I don't believe in talkin' to young ones about dead folks. 'Taint healthy."

"That's right," said Jem. "Children that's got to hustle about among live folks for a livin' best keep their minds out of cemeteries. But, Hully Gee, what a queer thing for a young one to say."

"And that ain't all," Jane went on, her giggle half amused, half nervous. "'But I don't fall asleep when I see Aunt Hester,' says she. 'I fall awake. It's more awake there than here.'

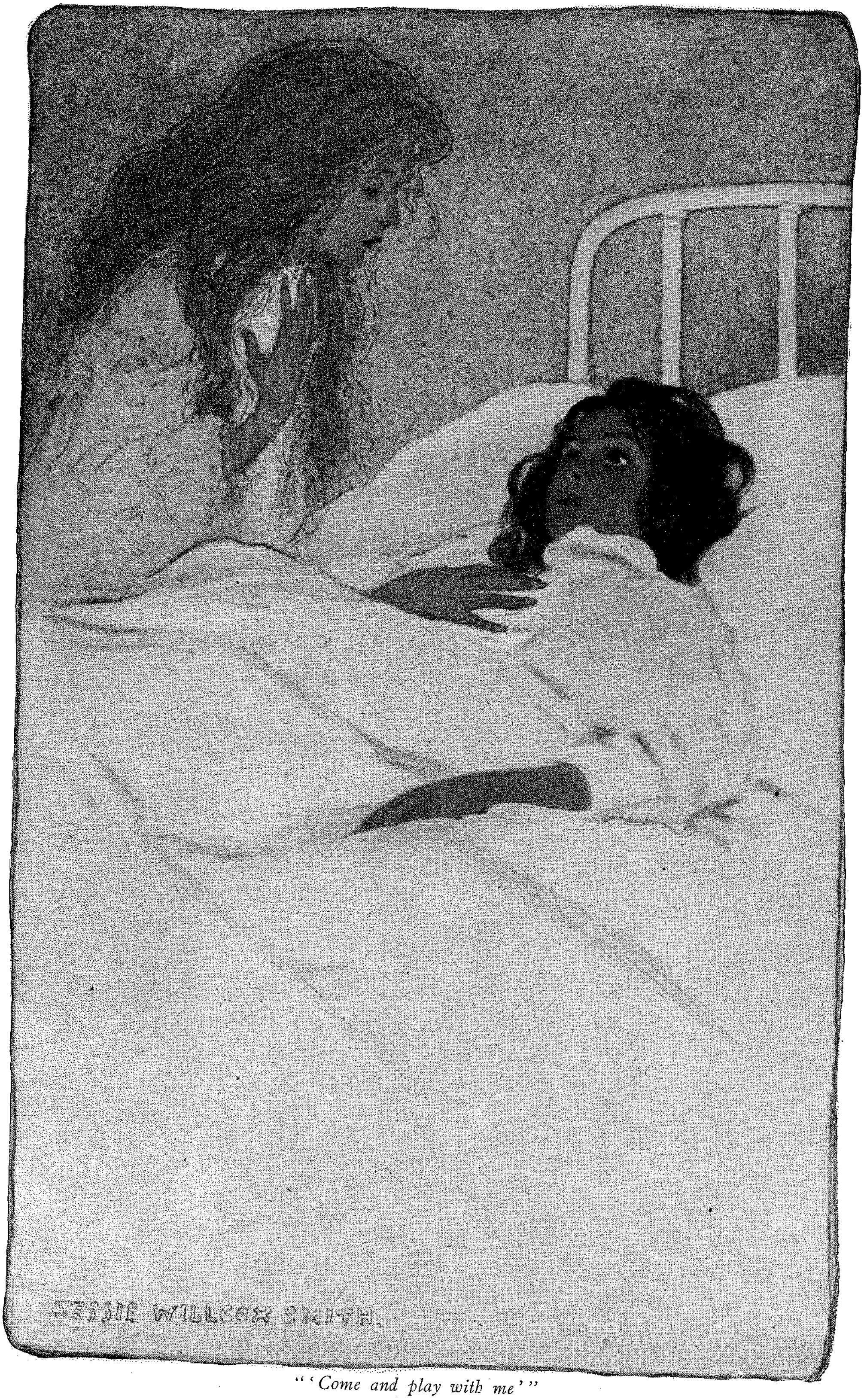
"'Where?' says I, laughing a bit, though it did make me feel queer.

"'I don't know,' she says in that soft little quiet way of hers. 'There.' And not another thing could I get out of her."

On the hot night through whose first hours Judith lay panting in her corner of the room, tormented and kept awake by the constant roar and rush and flash of lights, she was trying to go to sleep in the hope of leaving all the heat and noise and discomfort behind, and reaching Aunt Hester. If she could fall awake she would feel and hear none of it. It would all be unreal and she would know that only the lightness and the air like flowers and the lovely brightness were true. Once, as she tossed on her cot-bed, she broke into a low little laugh to think how untrue things really were and how strange it was that people did not understand—that even she felt as she lay in the darkness that she could not get away. And she could not get away unless the train would stop just long enough to let her fall asleep. If she could fall asleep between the trains, she would not awaken. But they came so quickly one after the other. Her hair was damp as she pushed it from her forehead, the bed felt hot against her skin, the people in the next flat quarreled more angrily, Judith heard a loud slap, and then the woman began to cry. She was a young married woman, scarcely more than a girl. Her marriage had not been as successful as that of Judith's parents. Both husband and wife had irritable tempers. Through the thin wall Judith could hear the girl sobbing angrily as the man flung himself out of bed, put on his clothes and went out, banging the door after him.

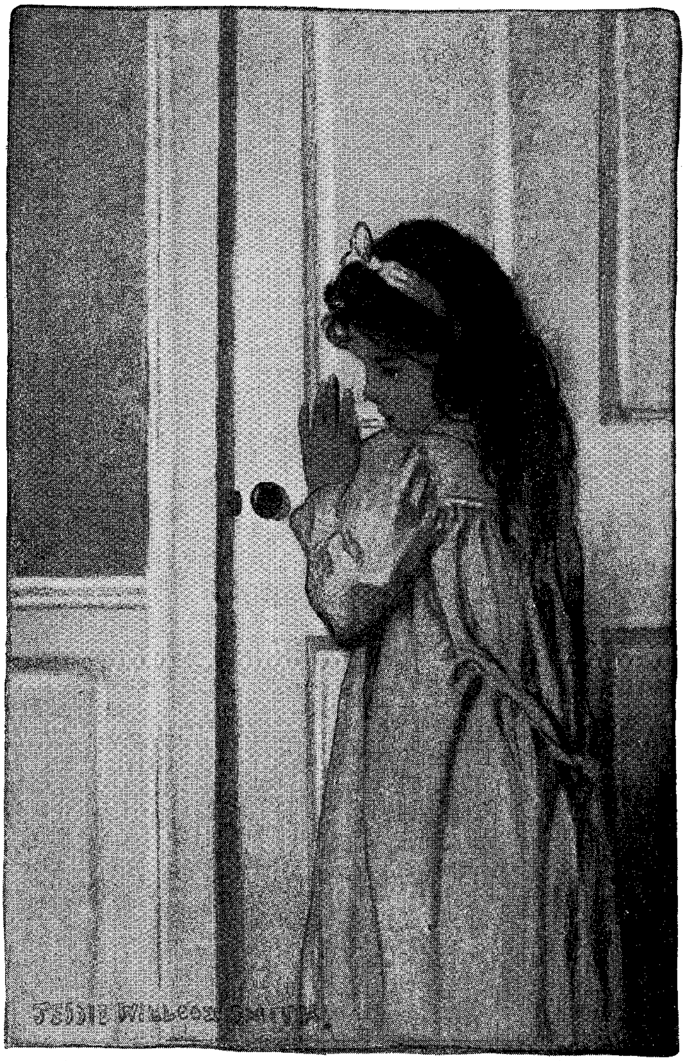
"She doesn't know," the child whispered eerily, "that it isn't real at all."

There was in her strange little soul a secret no one knew the existence of. It was a vague belief that she herself was not quite real—or that she did not belong to the life she had been born into. Her mother and father loved her and she loved them, but sometimes she was on the brink of telling them that she could not stay long—that some mistake had been made. What mistake—or where she was to go if she went, she did not know. She used to catch her breath and stop herself and feel frightened when she had been near speaking of this fantastic thing. But the building full of workmen's flats, the hot room, the Elevated


JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH

“‘*Come and play with me*’”

Railroad, the quarreling people, were all a mistake. Just once or twice in her life she had seen places and things which did not seem so foreign. Once, when she had been taken to the Park in the Spring, she had wandered away from her mother to a sequestered place among shrubs and trees, all waving tender, new pale green, with the leaves a few early hot days had caused to rush out and tremble unfurled. There had been a stillness there and scents and colors she knew. A bird had come and swung upon a twig quite near her and, looking at her with bright soft full eyes, had sung gently to her, as if he were speaking. A squirrel had crept up onto her lap and had not moved when she stroked it. Its eyes had been full and soft also, and she knew it understood that she could not hurt it. There was no mistake in her being among the new fair greenness, and the woodland things who spoke to her. They did not use words, but no words were needed. She knew what they were saying. When she had pushed her way through the greenness of the shrubbery to the driveway she had found herself quite near to an open carriage, which had stopped because the lady who sat in it was



"she must go and stand at the door and press her cheek against the wood and wait—and listen"

speaking to a friend on the path. She was a young woman, dressed in delicate spring colors, and the little girl at her side was dressed in white cloth, and it was at the little girl Judith found herself gazing. Under her large white hat and feathers her little face seemed like a white flower. She had a deep dimple near her mouth. Her hair was a rich coppery red and hung heavy and long about her cheeks and shoulders. She lifted her head a little when the child in the common hat and frock pressed through the greenness of the bushes and she looked at Judith just as the bird and the squirrel had looked at her. They gazed as if they had known each other for ages of years and were separated by nothing. Each of them was quite happy at being near the other, and there was not in the mind of either any question of their not being near each other again. The question did not ise in Judith's mind even when in a very few minutes the carriage moved away and was lost in the crowd of equipages rolling by.

At the hottest hours of the hot night Judith recalled to herself the cool of that day. She brought back the fresh pale greenness of the nook among the bushes into which she had forced her way, the scent of the leaves and grass which she had drawn in as she breathed, the nearness in the eyes of the bird, the squirrel, and the child. She smiled as she thought of these things, and as she continued to remember yet other things, bit by bit, she felt less hot—she gradually forgot to listen for the roar of the train—she smiled still more—she lay quite still—she was cool—a tiny fresh breeze fluttered through the window and played about her forehead. She was smiling in soft delight as her eyelids drooped and closed.

"I am falling awake," she was murmuring as her lashes touched her cheek.

Perhaps when her eyes closed the sultriness of the night had changed to the momentary freshness of the turning dawn, and the next hour or so was really cooler. She knew no more heat but slept softly, deeply, long—or it seemed to her afterwards that she had slept long—as if she had drifted far away in dreamless peace.

She remembered no dream, saw nothing, felt nothing until, as it seemed to her, in the early morning, she opened her eyes. All was quite still and clear—the air of the room was pure and sweet. There was no sound anywhere and, curiously enough, she was not surprised by this, nor did she expect to hear anything disturbing.

She did not look round the room. Her eyes remained resting upon what she first saw—and she was not surprised by this either. A little girl about her own age was standing smiling at her. She had large eyes, a deep dimple near her mouth, and coppery red hair which fell about her cheeks and shoulders. Judith knew her and smiled back at her.

She lifted her hand—and it was a pure white little hand with long tapering fingers.

"Come and play with me," she said—though Judith heard no voice while she knew what she was saying. "Come and play with me."

Then she was gone, and in a few seconds Judith was awake, the air of the room had changed, the noise and clatter of the streets came in at the window, and the Elevated train went thundering by. Judith did not ask herself how the child had gone or how she had come. She lay still, feeling undisturbed by everything and smiling as she had smiled in her sleep.

While she sat at the breakfast table she saw her mother looking at her curiously.

"You look as if you'd slept cool instead of hot last night," she said. "You look better than you did yesterday. You're pretty well, ain't you, Judy?"

Judith's smile meant that she was quite well, but she said nothing about her sleeping.

The heat did not disturb her through the day, though the hours grew hotter and hotter as they passed. Jane Foster, sweltering at her machine, was obliged to stop every few minutes to wipe the beads from her face and neck. Sometimes she could not remain seated, but got up panting to drink water and fan herself with a newspaper.

"I can't stand much more of this," she kept saying. "If there don't come a thunderstorm to cool things off I don't know what I'll do. This room's about five hundred."

But the heat grew greater and the Elevated trains went thundering by.

When Jem came home from his work his supper was not ready. Jane was sitting helplessly by the window, almost livid in her pallor. The table was but half spread.

"Hullo," said Jem; "it's done you up, ain't it?"

"Well, I guess it has," good-naturedly, certain of his sympathy. "But I'll get over it presently, and then I can get you a cold bite. I can't stand over the stove and cook."

"Hully Gee, a cold bite's all a man wants on a night like this. Hot chops'd give him the jim-jams. But I've got good news for you—it's cheered me up myself."

Jane lifted her head from the chair back.

"What is it?"

"Well, it came through my boss. He's always been friendly to me. He asks a question or so every now and then and seems to take an interest. To-day he was asking me if it wasn't pretty hot and noisy down here, and after I told him how we stood it, he said he believed he could get us a better place to stay in through the summer. Some one he knows has had illness and trouble in his family and he's obliged to close his house and take his wife away into the mountains. They've got a beautiful big house in one of them far up streets by the Park and he wants to get care-takers in that can come well recommended. The boss said he could recommend us fast enough. And there's a big light basement that'll be as cool as the woods. And we can move in to-morrow. And all we've got to do is to see that things are safe and live happy."

"Oh, Jem!" Jane ejaculated. "It sounds too good to be true! Up by the Park! A big cool place to live!"

"We've none of us ever been in a house the size of it. You know what they look like outside, and they say they're bigger than they look. It's your business to go over the rooms every day or so to see nothing's going wrong in them—moths or dirt, I suppose. It's all left open but just one room they've left locked and don't want interfered with. I told the boss I thought the basement would seem like the Waldorf-Astoria to us. I tell you I was so glad I scarcely knew what to say."

Jane drew a long breath.

"A big house up there," she said. "And only one closed room in it. It's too good to be true!"

"Well, whether it's true or not we'll move out there to-morrow," Jem answered cheerfully. "To-morrow morning bright and early. The boss said the sooner the better."

A large house left deserted by those who have filled its rooms with emotions and life, expresses a silence, a quality all its own. A house unfurnished and empty seems less impressively silent. The fact of its devoidness of sound is upon the whole more natural. But carpets accustomed to the pressure of constantly passing feet, chairs and sofas which have held human warmth, draperies used to the touch of hands drawing them aside to let in daylight, pictures which have smiled back at thinking eyes, mirrors which have reflected faces passing hourly in changing moods, elate or dark or longing, walls which have echoed back voices—all these things when left alone seem to be held in strange arrest, as if by some spell intensifying the effect of the pause in their existence.

The child Judith felt this deeply throughout the entirety of her young being.

"How *still* it is," she said to her mother the first time they went over the place together.

"Well, it seems still up here—and kind of dead," Jane Foster replied with her habitual sociable half-laugh. "But seems to me it always feels that way in a house people's left. It's cheerful enough down in that big basement with all the windows open. We can sit in that room they've had fixed to play billiards in. We sha'n't hurt nothing. We can keep the table and things covered up. Tell you, Judy, this'll be different from last summer. The Park ain't but a few steps away an' we can go and sit there too when we feel like it. Talk about the country—I don't want no more country than this is. You'll be made over the months we stay here."

Judith felt as if this must veritably be a truth. The houses on either side of the street were closed for the summer. Their occupants had gone to the seaside or the mountains and the windows and doors were boarded up. The street was a quiet one at any time, and wore now the aspect of a street in a city of the dead. The green trees of the Park were to be seen either gently stirring or motionless in the sun at the side of the avenue crossing the end of it. The only token of the existence of the Elevated Railroad was a remote occasional hum suggestive of the flying past of a giant bee. The thing seemed no longer a roaring demon, and Judith scarcely recognized that it was still the center of the city's rushing, heated life.

The owners of the house had evidently deserted it suddenly. The windows had not been boarded up and the rooms had been left in their ordinary condition. The furniture was not covered or the hangings swathed. Jem Foster had been told that his wife must put things in order.

The house was beautiful and spacious, its decorations and appointments were not mere testimonies to freedom of expenditure, but expressions of a dignified and cultivated thought. Judith followed her mother from room to room in one of her singular moods. The loftiness of the walls, the breadth and space about her made her, at intervals, draw in her breath with pleasure. The pictures, the colors, the rich and beautiful textures she saw brought to her the free—and at the same time soothed—feeling she remembered as the chief feature of the dreams in which she "fell awake." But beyond all other things she rejoiced in the height and space, the sweep of view through one large room into another. She continually paused and stood with her face lifted looking up at the pictured things floating on a ceiling above her. Once, when she had stood doing this long enough to forget herself, she was startled by her mother's laugh, which broke in upon the silence about them with a curiously earthly sound which was almost a shock.

"Wake up, Judy; have you gone off in a dream? You look all the time as if you was walking in your sleep."

"It's so high," said Judy. "Those clouds make it look like the sky."

"I've got to set these chairs straight," said Jane. "Looks like they'd been havin' a concert here. All these chairs together an' that part of the room clear."

She began to move the chairs and rearrange them, bustling about cheerfully and talking the while. Presently she stooped to pick something up.

"What's this," she said, and then uttered a startled exclamation. "Mercy! they felt so kind of clammy they made me jump. They *have* had a party. Here's some of the flowers left fallen on the carpet."

She held up a cluster of wax-white hyacinths and large heavy rosebuds, faded to discoloration.

"This has dropped out of some set piece. It felt like cold flesh when I first touched it. I don't like a lot of white things together. They look too kind of mournful. Just go and get the wastepaper basket in the library, Judy. We'll carry it round to drop things into. Take that with you."

Judith carried the flowers into the library and bent to pick up the basket as she dropped them into it.

As she raised her head she found her eyes looking directly into other eyes which gazed at her from the wall. They were smiling from the face of a child in a picture. As soon as she saw them Judith drew in her breath and stood still, smiling, too, in response. The picture was that of a little girl in a floating white frock. She had a deep dimple at one corner of her mouth, her hanging hair was like burnished copper, she held up a slender hand with pointed fingers and Judith knew her. Oh! she knew her quite well. She had never felt so near any one else throughout her life.

"Judy, Judy!" Jane Foster called out. "Come here with your basket; what you staying for?"

Judith returned to her.

"We've got to get a move on," said Jane, "or we sha'n't get nothin' done before supper time. What was you lookin' at?"

"There's a picture in there of a little girl I know," Judith said. "I don't know her name, but I saw her in the Park once and—and I dreamed about her."

"Dreamed about her? If that ain't queer. Well, we've got to hurry up. Here's some more of them dropped flowers. Give me the basket."

They went through the whole house together, from room to room, up the many stairs, from floor to floor, and everywhere Judith felt the curious stillness and silence. It can not be doubted that Jane Foster felt it also.

"It is the stillest house I ever was in," she said. "I'm glad I've got you with me, Judy. If I was sole alone I believe it 'ud give me the creeps. These big places ought to have big families in them."

It was on the fourth floor that they came upon the Closed Room. Jane had found some of the doors shut and some open, but a turn of the handle gave entrance through all the unopened ones until they reached this one at the back on the fourth floor.

"This one won't open," Jane said, when she tried the handle. Then she shook it once or twice. "No, it's locked," she decided after an effort or two. "There, I've just remembered. There's one kept locked. Folks always has things they want locked up. I'll make sure, though."

She shook it, turned the handle, shook again, pressed her knee against the panel. The lock resisted all effort.

"Yes, this is the closed one," she made up her mind. "It's locked hard and fast. It's the closed one."

It was logically proved to be the closed one by the fact that she found no other one locked as she finished her round of the chambers.

Judith was a little tired before they had done their work. But her wandering pilgrimage through the large, silent, deserted house had been a revelation of new emotions to her. She was always a silent child. Her mind was so full of strange thoughts that it seemed unnecessary to say many words. The things she thought as she followed her from room to room, from floor to floor, until they reached the locked door, would have amazed and puzzled Jane Foster if she had known of their existence. Most of all, perhaps, she would have been puzzled by the effect the closed door had upon the child. It puzzled and bewildered Judith herself and made her feel a little weary.

She wanted so much to go into the room. Without in the least understanding the feeling, she was quite shaken by it. It seemed as if the closing of all the other rooms would have been a small matter in comparison with the closing of this one. There was something inside which she wanted to see—there was something—somehow there was something which wanted to see her. What a pity that the door was locked! Why had it been done? She sighed unconsciously several times during the evening, and Jane Foster thought she was tired.

"But you'll sleep cool enough to-night, Judy," she said. "And get a good rest. Them little breezes that comes rustling through the trees in the Park comes right along the street to us."

She and Jem Foster slept well. They spent the evening in the highest spirits and—as it seemed to them—the most luxurious comfort. The space afforded them by the big basement, with its kitchen and laundry and pantry, and, above all, the specially large room which had been used for billiard playing, supplied actual vistas. For the sake of convenience and coolness they used the billiard room as a dormitory, sleeping on light cots, and they slept with all their windows open, the little breezes wandering from among the trees of the Park to fan them. How they laughed and enjoyed themselves over their supper, and how they stretched themselves out with sighs of joy in the darkness as they sank into the cool, untroubled waters of deep sleep.

"This is about the top notch," Jem murmured as he lost his hold on the world of waking life and work.

But though she was cool, though she was undisturbed, though her body rested in absolute repose, Judith did not sleep for a long time. She lay and listened to the quietness. There was mystery in it. The footstep of a belated passer-by in the street woke strange echoes, a voice heard in the distance in a riotous shout suggested weird things. And as she lay and listened, it was as if she were not only listening but waiting for something. She did not know at all what she was waiting for, but waiting she was.

She lay upon her cot with her arms flung out and her eyes wide open. What was it that she wanted—that which was in the closed room? Why had they locked the door? If they had locked the doors of the big parlors it would not have mattered. If they had locked the door of the library—Her mind paused—as if for a moment, something held it still. Then she remembered that to have locked the doors of the library would have been to lock in the picture of the child with the greeting look in her eyes and the fine little uplifted hand. She was glad the room had been left open. But the room up-stairs—the one on the fourth floor—that was the one that mattered most of all. She knew that to-morrow she must go and stand at the door and press her cheek against the wood and wait—and listen. Thinking this and knowing that it must be so, she fell—at last—asleep.

(*To be concluded*)

A TEMPERED WIND

BY

O. HENRY

AUTHOR OF "THE PIMIENTA PANCAKES," "TOBIN'S PALM," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAY WILSON PRESTON

THE first time my optical nerves was disturbed by the sight of Buckingham Skinner was in Kansas City. I was standing on a corner when I see Buck stick his straw-colored head out of a third-story window of a business block and holler, "Whoa, there! Whoa!" like you would in endeavoring to assuage a team of runaway mules.

I looked around; but all the animals I see in sight is a policeman, having his shoes shined, and a couple of delivery wagons hitched to posts. Then in a minute downstairs tumbles this Buckingham Skinner, and runs to the corner, and stands and gazes down the other street at the imaginary dust kicked up by the fabulous hoofs of the fictitious team of chimerical quadrupeds. And then B. Skinner goes back up to the third-story room again, and I see that the lettering on the window is "The Farmers' Friend Loan Company."

By and by Straw-top comes down again, and I crossed the street to meet him, for I had my ideas. Yes, sir, when I got close I could see where he overdone it. He was Reub all right as far as his blue jeans and cowhide boots went, but he had a matinee actor's hands, and the rye straw stuck over his ear looked like it belonged to the property man of the Old Homestead Co. Curiosity to know what his graft was got the best of me.

"Was that your team broke away and run just now?" I asks him, polite. "I tried to stop 'em," says I, "but I couldn't. I guess they're half way back to the farm by now."

"Gosh blame them darned mules," says Straw-top, in a voice so good that I nearly apologized; "they're a'lus bustin' loose." And then he looks at me close, and then he takes off his hayseed hat, and says, in a different voice: "I'd like to shake hands with Parleyvoo Pickens, the greatest street man in the West, barring only Montague Silver, which you can no more than allow."

I let him shake hands with me.

"I learned under Silver," I said; "I don't begrudge him the lead. But what's your graft, son? I admit that the phantom flight of the non-existing animals at which you remarked 'Whoa!' has puzzled me somewhat. How do you win out on the trick?"

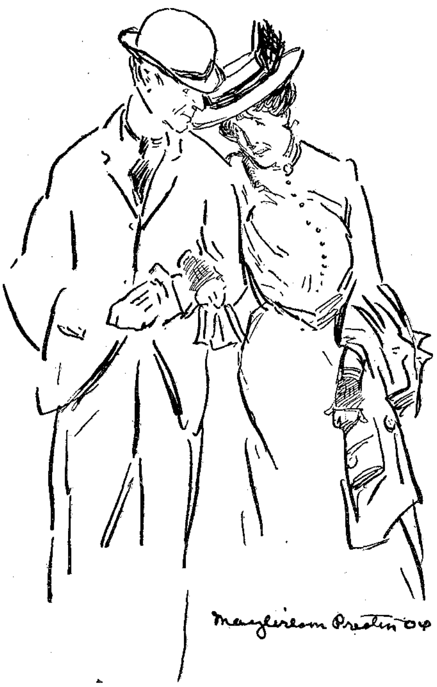
Buckingham Skinner blushed.

"Pocket money," says he; "that's all. I am temporarily unfinanced. This little coup de rye straw is good for forty dollars in a town of this size. How do I work it? Why, I involve myself, as you perceive, in the loathsome apparel of the rural dub. Thus embalmed I am Jonas Stubblefield—a name impossible to improve upon. I repair noisily to the office of some loan company conveniently located in the third-floor, front. There I lay my hat and yarn gloves on the floor and ask to mortgage my farm for $2,000 to pay for my sister's musical education in Europe. Loans like that always suit the loan companies. It's ten to one that when the note falls due the foreclosure will be leading the semiquavers by a couple of lengths.

"Well, sir, I reach in my pocket for the abstract of title; but I suddenly hear my team running away. I run to the window and emit the word—or exclamation, whichever it may be—viz., 'Whoa!' Then I rush down-stairs and down the street, returning in a few minutes. 'Dang them mules,' I says; 'they done run away and busted the doubletree and two traces. Now I got to hoof it home, for I never brought no money along. Reckon we'll talk about that loan some other time, gen'lemen.'

"Then I spreads out my tarpaulin, like the Israelites, and waits for the manna to drop.

"'Why, no, Mr. Stubblefield,' says the lobster-colored party in the specs and dotted piqué vest; 'oblige us by accepting this ten-dollar bill until to-morrow. Get your harness repaired and call in at ten. We'll be pleased to accommodate you in the matter of this loan.'



"she is a peach and of the cling variety"

"It's a slight thing," says Buckingham Skinner, modest, "but, as I said, only for temporary loose change."

"It's nothing to be ashamed of," says I, in respect for his mortification; "in case of an emergency. Of course, it's small compared to organizing a trust or bridge whist; but even the Chicago University had to be started in a small way."

"What's your graft these days?" Buckingham Skinner asks me.

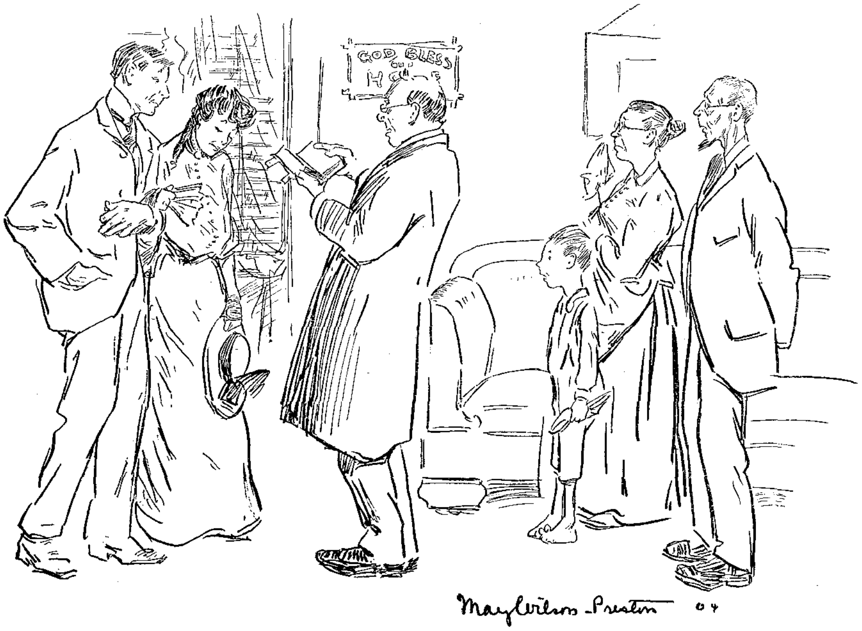
"The legitimate," says I. "I'm handling rhinestones and Dr. Oleum Sinapi's Electric Headache Battery and the Swiss Warblers' Bird Call, a small lot of the new queer ones and twos, and the Bonanza Budget, consisting of a rolled-gold wedding and engagement ring, six Egyptian lily bulbs, a combination pickle fork and nail-clipper, and fifty engraved visiting cards—no two names alike—all for the sum of 38 cents."

"Two months ago," says Buckingham Skinner, "I was doing well down in Texas with a patent instantaneous fire kindler, made of compressed wood ashes and benzine. I sold loads of 'em in towns where they like to burn niggers quick, without having to ask somebody for a light. And just when I was doing the best they strikes oil down there and puts me out of business. 'Your machine's too slow, now, pardner,' they tells me. 'We can have a coon in hell with this here petroleum before your old flint-and-tinder truck can get him warm enough to perfess religion.' And so I gives up the kindler and drifts up here to K. C. This little curtain-raiser you seen me doing, Mr. Pickens, with the simulated farm and the hypothetical team, ain't in my line at all and I'm ashamed you found me working it."

"No man," says I, kindly, "need to be ashamed of putting the skibunk on a loan corporation for even so small a sum as ten dollars, when he is financially abashed. Still, it wasn't quite the proper thing. It's too much like borrowing money without paying it back."

I liked Buckingham Skinner from the start, for as good a man as ever stood over the axles and breathed gasoline smoke. And pretty soon we gets thick, and I let him in on a scheme I'd had in mind for some time, and offers to go partners.

"Anything," says Buck, "that is not actually dishonest will find me willing and ready. Let us perforate into the inwardness of your proposition. I feel degraded when I am forced to wear property straw in my hair and assume a bucolic air for the small sum of ten dollars. Actually, Mr. Pickens, it makes me feel like the Ophelia



"'So the Reverend Green, after hesitations, marries 'em in the farmer's parlor'"

of the Great Occidental All-Star One-Night Consolidated Theatrical Aggregation."

This scheme of mine was one that suited my proclivities. By nature I am some sentimental, and have always felt gentle toward the mollifying elements of existence. I am disposed to be lenient with the arts and sciences; and I find time to instigate a cordiality for the more human works of nature, such as romance and the atmosphere and grass and poetry and the Seasons. I never skin a sucker without admiring the prismatic beauty of his scales. I never sell a little auriferous trifle to the man with the hoe without noticing the beautiful harmony there is between gold and green. And that's why I liked this scheme; it was so full of outdoor air and landscapes and easy money.

We had to have a young lady assistant to help us work this graft; and I asked Buck if he knew of one to fill the bill.

"One," says I, "that is cool and wise and strictly business from her pompadour to her Oxfords. No ex-toe-dancers or gum-chewers or crayon portrait canvassers for this."

Buck claimed he knew a suitable feminine, and he takes me around to see Miss Sarah Malloy. The minute I see her I am pleased. She looked to be the goods as ordered, wrapped up and delivered at residence by a boy in buttons and charged as sundries to the old man's account. No sign of the three p's about her—no peroxide, patchouli, nor peau de soie; about twenty-two, brown hair, pleasant ways—the kind of a lady for the place.

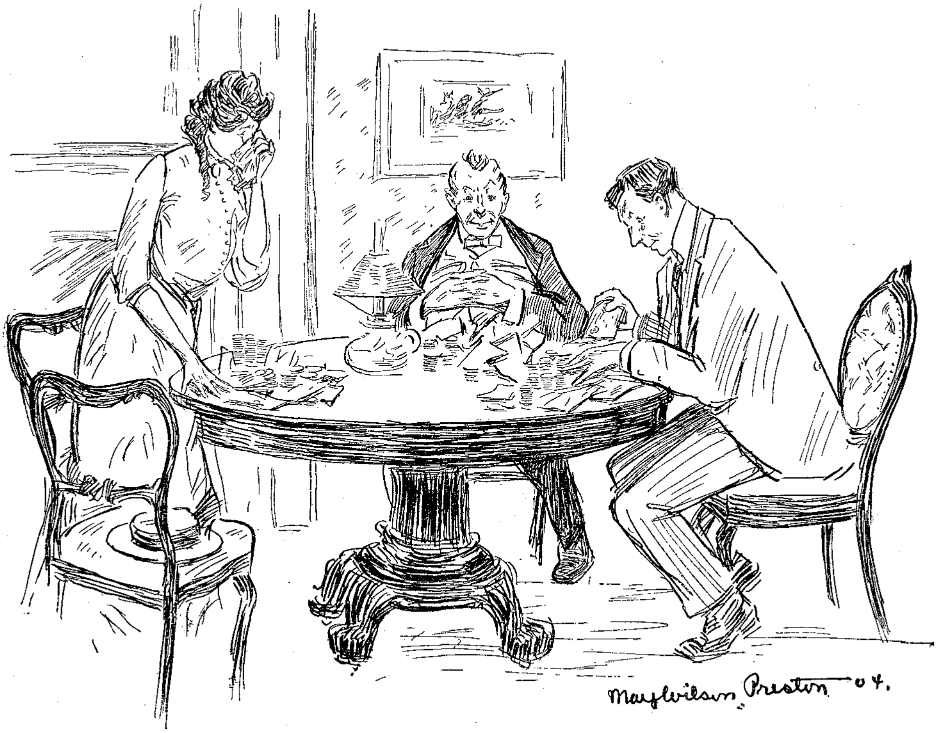
"A description of the sandbag, if you please," she begins.

"Why, ma'am," says I, "this graft of ours is so nice and refined and romantic, it would make the balcony scene in 'Romeo and Juliet' look like second-story work."

We talked it over, and Miss Malloy agreed to come in as a business partner. She said she was glad to get a chance to give up her place as stenographer and secretary to a suburban lot company, and go into something respectable.

This is the way we worked our scheme. First, I figured it out by a kind of a proverb. The best grafts in the world are built up on copy-book maxims and psalms and proverbs and Esau's fables. They seem to kind of hit off human nature. Our peaceful little swindle was constructed on the old saying: "The whole push loves a lover."

One evening Buck and Miss Malloy drives up like blazes in a buggy to a farmer's door. She is pale but affectionate, clinging to his arm—always clinging to his arm. Any one can see that she is a peach and of the cling variety. They claim they are eloping for to be married on account of cruel parents.


Mary Wilson Preston '04.

"On the 15th day of May us three divided about $6,000"

They ask where they can find a preacher. Farmer says, "B'gum there ain't any nigher than Reverend Abels, four mile over on Caney Creek." Farmeress wipes her hand on her apron and rubbers through her specs.

Then, lo and look ye! Up the road from the other way jogs Parleyvoo Pickens in a gig, dressed in black, white necktie, long face, sniffing his nose, emitting a spurious kind of a noise resembling the long meter doxology.

"B'jinks!" says farmer, "if thar ain't a preacher now!"

It transpires that I am Rev. Abijah Green, traveling over to Little Bethel school-house for to preach next Sunday.

The young folks will have it they must be married, for pa is pursuing them with the plow mules and the buckboard. So the Reverend Green, after hesitations, marries 'em in farmer's parlor. And farmer grins, and has in the cider, and says "B'gum!" and farmeress sniffles a bit and pats the bride on the shoulder. And Parleyvoo Pickens, the wrong reverend, writes out a marriage certificate, and farmer and farmeress sign it as witnesses. And the parties of the first, second, and third part gets in their vehicles and rides away. Oh, that was an idyllic graft! True love and the lowing kine and the sun shining on the red barns—it certainly had all other impostures I know about beat to a batter.

I suppose I happened along in time to marry Buck and Miss Malloy at about twenty farm-houses. I hated to think how the romance was going to fade later on when all them marriage certificates turned up in banks where we'd discounted 'em, and the farmers had to pay them notes of hand they'd signed, running from $300 to $500.

On the 15th day of May us three divided about $6,000. Miss Malloy nearly cried with joy. You don't often see a tenderer-hearted girl or one that was so bent on doing right.

"Boys," says she, dabbing her eyes with a little handkerchief, "this stake comes in handier than a powder rag at a fat men's ball. It gives me a chance to reform. I was trying to get out of the real estate business when you fellows came along. But if you hadn't taken me in on this neat little proposition for removing the cuticle of the rutabaga propagators I'm afraid I'd have got into something worse. I was about to accept a place in one of these Women's Auxiliary Bazars, where they build a parsonage by selling a spoonful of chicken salad and a cream-puff for seventy-five cents and calling it a Business Men's Lunch.

Now I can go into a square, honest business, and give all them queer jobs the shake. I'm going to Cincinnati and start a palm reading and clairvoyant joint. As Madame Saramaloi, the Eygyptian Sorceress, I shall give everybody a dollar's worth of good, honest prognostication. Good-by, boys. Take my advice and go into some decent fake. Get friendly with the police and newspapers and you'll be all right."

So then we all shook hands, and Miss Malloy left us. Me and Buck also rose up and sauntered off a few hundred miles; for we didn't care to be around when them marriage certificates fell due.

With about $4,000 between us we hit that bumptious little town off the New Jersey coast they call New York.

If there ever was an aviary overstocked with jays it is that Yaptown-on-the-Hudson. Cosmopolitan they call it. You bet. So's a piece of fly-paper. You listen close when they're buzzing and trying to pull their feet out of the sticky stuff. "Little old New York's good enough for us"—that's what they sing.

There's enough Reubs walk down Broadway in one hour to buy up a week's output of the factory in Augusta, Maine, that makes Knaughty Knovelties and the little Phine Phun oroide gold finger ring that squirts perfume in a friend's eye.

You'd think New York people was all wise; but no. They don't get a chance to learn. Everything's too compressed. Even the hay-seeds are baled hay-seeds. But what else can you expect from a town that's shut off from the world by the ocean on one side and New Jersey on the other?

It's no place for an honest grafter with a small capital. There's too big a protective tariff on bunco. Even when Giovanni sells a quart of warm worms and chestnut hulls he has to hand out a pint to an insectivorous copper. And the hotel man charges double for everything in the bill that he sends by the patrol wagon to the altar where the Duke is about to marry the heiress.

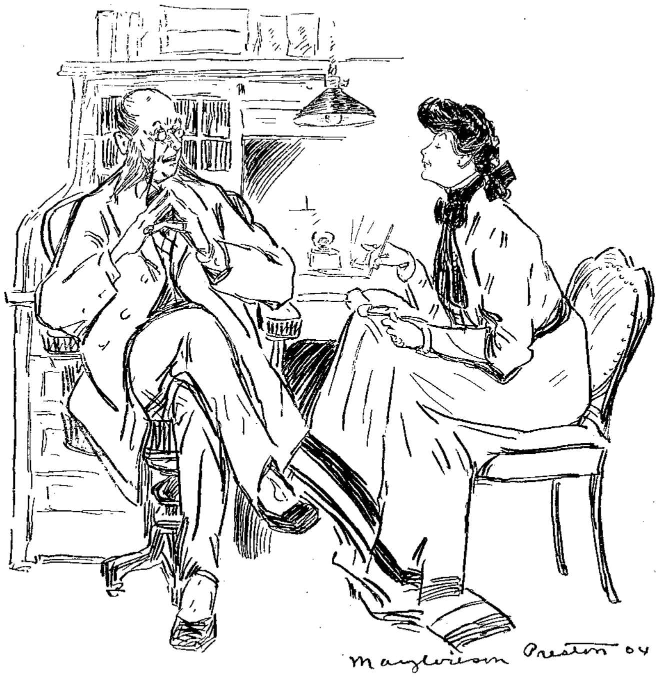
But old Badville-near-Coney is the ideal burg for a refined piece of piracy if you can pay the bunco duty. Imported grafts come pretty high. The custom-house officers that look after it carry clubs, and it's hard to smuggle in even a bib-and-tucker swindle to work Brooklyn with unless you can pay the toll. But now, me and Buck, having capital, descends upon New York to try and trade the metropolitan backwoodsmen a few glass beads for real estate just as the Vans did a hundred or two years ago.

At an East Side hotel we gets acquainted with Romulus G. Atterbury, a man with the finest head for financial operations I ever saw. It was all bald and glossy except for gray side whiskers. Put that head behind an office railing, and you'd deposit a million with it without a receipt. This Atterbury was well dressed, though he ate seldom; and the synopsis of his talk would make the conversation of a siren sound like a cab driver's kick. He said he used to be a member of the Stock Exchange, but some of the big capitalists got jealous and formed a ring that forced him to sell his seat.

Atterbury got to liking me and Buck and he begun to throw on the canvas for us some of the schemes that had caused his hair to evacuate. He had one scheme for starting a National Bank on $45 that made the Mississippi Bubble look as solid as a glass marble. He talked this to us for three days, and when his throat was good and sore we told him about the roll we had. Atterbury borrowed a quarter from us and went out and got a box of throat lozenges and started all over again. This time he talked bigger things, and he got us to see 'em as he did. The scheme he laid out looked like a sure winner, and he talked me and Buck into putting our capital against his burnished dome of thought. It looked all right for a kid-gloved graft. It seemed to be just about an inch and a half outside of the reach of the police, and as money-making as a mint. It was just what me and Buck wanted—a regular business at a permanent stand, with no open air spieling with tonsilitis on the street corners every evening.

So, in six weeks you see a handsome furnished set of offices down in the Wall Street neighborhood, with "The Golconda Gold Bond and Investment Company" in gilt letters on the door. And you see in his private room, with the door open, the secretary and treasurer, Mr. Buckingham Skinner, costumed like the lilies of the conservatory, with his high silk hat close to his hand. Nobody yet ever saw Buck outside of an instantaneous reach for his hat.

And you might perceive the president and general manager, Mr. R. G. Atterbury, with his priceless polished poll, busy in the main



"busy in the main office room dictating letters to a shorthand countess"

office room dictating letters to a shorthand countess, who has got pomp and a pompadour that is no less than a guarantee to investors.

There is a bookkeeper and an assistant, and a general atmosphere of varnish and culpability.

At another desk the eye is relieved by the sight of an ordinary man, attired with unscrupulous plainness, sitting with his feet up, eating apples, with his obnoxious hat on the back of his head. That man is no other than Colonel Tecumseh (once "Parleyvoo") Pickens, the vice-president of the company.

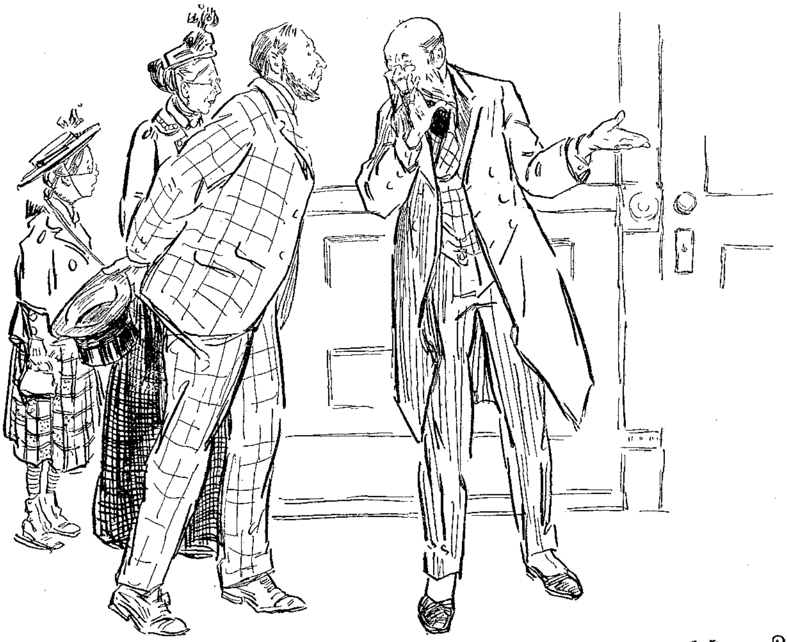
"No recherché rags for me," I says to Atterbury, when we was organizing the stage properties of the robbery. "I'm a plain man," says I, "and I do not use pajamas, French, or military hair-brushes. Cast me for the rôle of the rhinestone-in-the-rough or I don't go on exhibition. If you can use me in my natural, though displeasing form, do so."

"Dress you up?" says Atterbury; "I should say not! Just as you are you're worth more to the business than a whole roomful of the things they pin chrysanthemums on. You're to play the part of the solid but disheveled capitalist from the Far West. You despise the conventions. You've got so many stocks you can afford to shake socks. Conservative, homely, rough, shrewd, saving—that's your pose. It's a winner in New York. Keep your feet on the desk and eat apples. Whenever anybody comes in eat an apple. Let 'em see you stuff the peelings in a drawer of your desk. Look as economical and rich and rugged as you can."

I followed out Atterbury's instructions. I played the Rocky Mountain capitalist without ruching or frills. The way I deposited apple peelings to my credit in a drawer when any customers came in made Russell Sage look like a spendthrift. I could hear Atterbury saying to victims, as he smiled at me, indulgent and venerating, "That's our vice-president, Colonel Pickens . . . fortune in Western investments . . . delightfully plain manners, but . . . could sign his check for half a million . . . simple as a child . . . wonderful head . . . conservative and careful almost to a fault."

Atterbury managed the business. Me and Buck never quite understood all of it, though he explained it to us in full. It seems the company was a kind of coöperative one, and everybody that bought stock shared in the profits. First, we officers bought up a controlling interest—we had to have that—of the shares at 50 cents a hundred—just what the printer charged us—and the rest went to the public at a dollar each. The company guaranteed the stockholders a profit of ten per cent. each month, payable on the last day thereof.

When any stockholder had paid in as much as $100, the company issued him a Gold Bond and he became a bondholder. I asked Atterbury one day what benefits and appurtenances these Gold Bonds was to an investor more so than the immunities and privileges enjoyed by the common sucker who only owned stock. Atterbury picked up one of them Gold Bonds, all gilt and lettered up with flourishes and a big red seal tied with a blue ribbon in a bowknot, and he looked at me like his feelings was hurt.


Mary Wilson Preston 04.

" '*That's our vice-president, Colonel Pickens*' "

"My dear Colonel Pickens," says he, "you have no soul for Art. Think of a thousand homes made happy by possessing one of these beautiful gems of the lithographer's skill! Think of the joy in the household where one of these Gold Bonds hangs by a pink cord to the what-not, or is chewed by the baby, caroling gleefully upon the floor! Ah, I see your eye growing moist, Colonel—I have touched you, have I not?"

"You have not," says I, "for I've been watching you. The moisture you see is apple juice. You can't expect one man to act as a human cider-press and an art connoisseur too."

Atterbury attended to the details of the concern. As I understand it, they was simple. The investors in stock paid in their money, and—well, I guess that's all they had to do. The company received it, and—I don't call to mind anything else. Me and Buck knew more about selling corn salve than we did about Wall Street, but even we could see how the Golconda Gold Bond and Investment Company was making money. You take in money and pay back ten per cent. of it; it's plain enough that you make a clean, legitimate profit of 90 per cent., less expenses, as long as the fish bite.

Atterbury wanted to be president and treasurer too, but Buck winks an eye at him and says: "You was to furnish the brains. Do you call it good brain work when you propose to take in money at the door, too? Think again. I hereby nominate myself treasurer ad valorem, sine die, and by acclamation. I chip in that much brain work free. Me and Pickens, we furnished the capital, and we'll handle the unearned increment as it incremates."

It cost us $500 for office rent and first payment on furniture; $1,500 more went for printing and advertising. Atterbury knew his business. "Three months to a minute we'll last," says he. "A day longer than that and we'll have to either go under or go under an alias. By that time we ought to clean up $30,000. And then a money belt and a lower berth for me, and the yellow journals and the furniture men can pick the bones."

Our ads. done the work. "Country weeklies and Washington hand-press dailies, of course," says I when we was ready to make contracts.

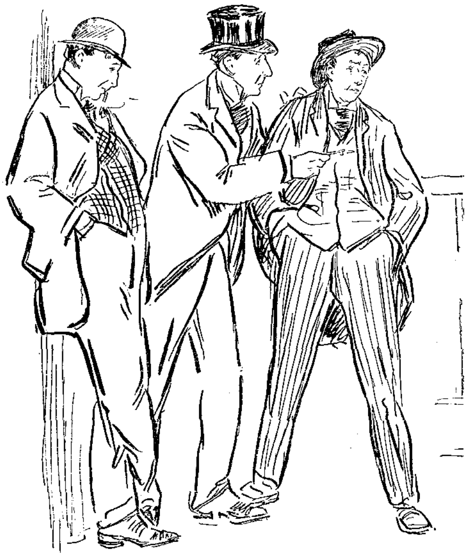
"Man," says Atterbury, "as its advertising manager you would cause a Limburger cheese factory to remain undiscovered during a hot summer. The game we're after is right here in New York and Brooklyn and the Harlem reading-rooms. They're the people that the street-car fenders and the Answers to Correspondents column and the pickpocket notices are made for. We want our ads. in the biggest city dailies, top of column, next to editorials on radium and pictures of the girl doing health exercises."

Pretty soon the money begins to roll in. Buck didn't have to pretend to be busy; his desk was piled high up with money orders and checks and greenbacks. People began to drop in the office and buy stock every day.

Most of the shares went in small amounts —$10 and $25 and $50, and a good many $2 and $3 lots. And the bald and inviolate cranium of President Atterbury shines with enthusiasm and demerit, while Colonel Tecumseh Pickens, the rude but reputable Crœsus of the West, consumes so many apples that the peelings hang to the floor from the mahogany garbage chest that he calls his desk.

Just as Atterbury said, we ran along about three months without being troubled. Buck cashed the paper as fast as it came in and kept the money in a safe deposit vault a block or so away. Buck never thought much of banks for such purposes. We paid the interest regular on the stock we'd sold, so there was nothing for anybody to squeal about. We had nearly $20,000 on hand and all three of us had been living as high as prize fighters out of training.

One morning, as me and Buck sauntered into the office, fat and flippant, from our noon grub, we met an easy-looking fellow, with a bright eye and a pipe in his mouth, coming out. We found Atterbury looking like he'd been caught a mile from home in a wet shower.



"But they all had

"Know that man?" he asked us.

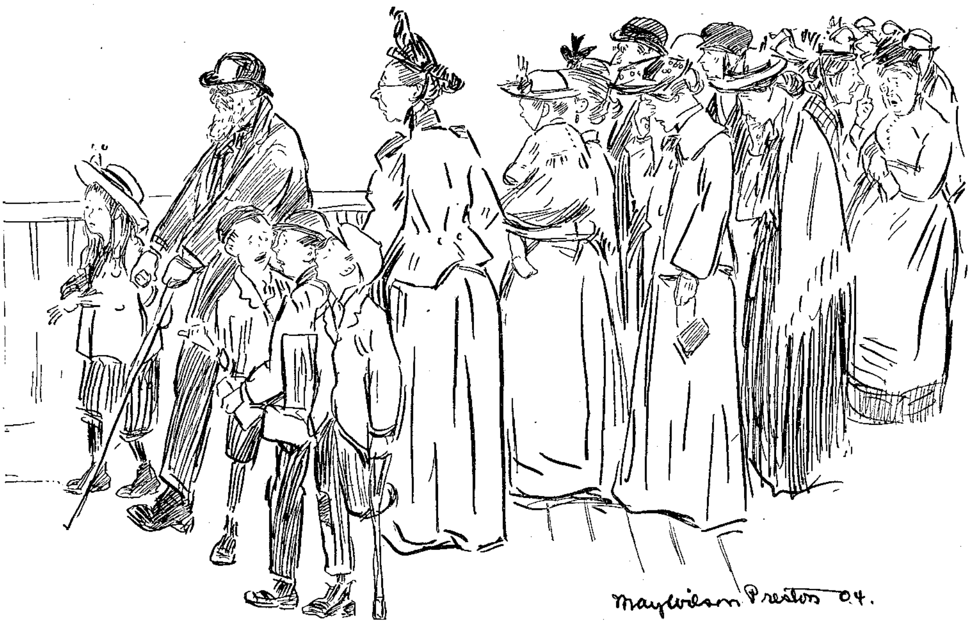
We said we didn't.

"I don't either," says Atterbury, wiping off his head; "but I'll bet enough Gold Bonds to paper a cell in the Tombs that he's a newspaper reporter."

"What did he want?" asks Buck.

"Information," says our president. "Said he was thinking of buying some stock. He asked me about nine hundred questions, and every one of 'em hit some sore place in the business. I know he's on a paper. You can't fool me. You see a man about half shabby, with an eye like a gimlet, smoking cut plug, with dandruff on his coat collar, and knowing more that J. P. Morgan and Shakespeare put together—if that ain't a reporter I never saw one. I was afraid of this. I don't mind detectives and post-office inspectors—I talk to 'em eight minutes and then sell 'em stock—but them reporters take the starch out of my collar. Boys, I recommend that we declare a dividend and fade away. The signs point that way."

Me and Buck talked to Atterbury and got him to stop sweating and stand still. That fellow didn't look like a reporter to us. Reporters always pull out a pencil and tablet


Mary Wilson Preston 04.

Golconda stock and looked as sick as you please"

on you, and tell you a story you've heard, and strike you for the drinks. But Atterbury was shaky and nervous all day.

The next day me and Buck comes down from the hotel about ten-thirty. On the way we buys the papers, and the first thing we see is a column on the front page about our little imposition. It was a shame the way that reporter intimated that we were no blood relatives of the late George W. Childs. He tells all about the scheme as he sees it, in a rich, racy kind of a guying style that might amuse most anybody except a stockholder. Yes, Atterbury was right; it behooveth the gaily clad treasurer and the pearly pated president and the rugged vice-president of the Golconda Gold Bond and Investment Company to go away real sudden and quick that their days might be longer upon the land.

Me and Buck hurries down to the office. We finds on the stairs and in the hall a crowd of people trying to squeeze into our office, which is already jammed full inside to the railing. They've nearly all got Golconda stock and Gold Bonds in their hands. Me and Buck judged they'd been reading the papers, too.

We stopped and looked at our stockholders, some surprised. It wasn't quite the kind of a gang we supposed had been investing. They all looked like poor people; there was plenty of old women and lots of young girls that you'd say worked in factories and mills. Some was old men that looked like war veterans, and some was crippled, and a good many was just kids—bootblacks and newsboys and messengers. Some was working-men in overalls, with their sleeves rolled up. Not one of the gang looked like a stockholder in anything unless it was a peanut stand. But they all had Golconda stock and looked as sick as you please.

I saw a queer kind of a pale look come on Buck's face when he sized up the crowd. He stepped up to a sickly looking woman and says: "Madam, do you own any of this stock?"

"I put in a hundred dollars," says the woman, faint like. "It was all I had saved in a year. One of my children is dying at home now and I haven't a cent in the house. I came to see if I could draw out some. The circulars said you could draw it at any time. But they say now I will lose it all."

There was a smart kind of a kid in the gang—I guess he was a newsboy. "I got in twenty-fi', mister," he says, looking hopeful at Buck's silk hat and clothes. "Dey paid me two-fifty a mont' on it. Say, a man tells me dey can't do dat and be on de square. Is dat straight? Do you guess I can get out my twenty-fi'?"

Some of the old women was crying. The factory girls was plumb distracted. They'd lost all their savings and they'd be docked for the time they lost coming to see about it.

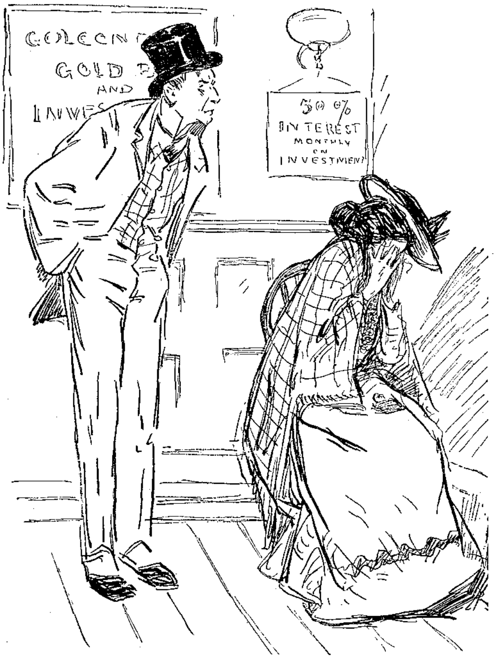
There was one girl—a pretty one—in a red shawl, crying in a corner like her heart would dissolve. Buck goes over and asks her about it.

"It ain't so much losing the money," mister," says she, shaking all over, "though I've been two years saving it up; but Jakey won't marry me now. He'll take Rosa Steinfeld. I know J—J—Jakey. She's got $400 in the savings bank. Ai, ai, ai—" she sings out.

Buck looks all around with that same funny look on his face. And then we see leaning against the wall, puffing at his pipe, with his eye shining at us, this newspaper reporter. Buck and me walks over to him.

"You're a real interesting writer," says Buck. "How far do you mean to carry it? Anything more up your sleeve?"

"Oh, I'm just waiting around," says the reporter, smoking away, "in case any news turns up. It's up to your stockholders now. Some of them might complain, you know. Isn't that the patrol wagon now?" he says, listening to a sound outside. "No," he goes on, "that's Doc. Whittleford's old cadaver coupé from the Roosevelt. I ought to know that gong. Yes, I suppose I've written some interesting stuff at times."



"'Jakey won't marry me now. He'll take Rosa Steinfeld'"

"You wait," says Buck; "I'm going to throw an item of news in your way."

Buck reaches in his pocket and hands me a key. I knew what he meant before he spoke. Confounded old buccaneer—I knew what he meant. They don't make them any better than Buck.

"Pick," says he, looking at me hard, "ain't this graft a little out of our line? Do we want Jakey to marry Rosa Steinfeld?"

"You've got my vote," says I. "I'll have it here in ten minutes." And I starts for the safe deposit vaults.

I comes back with the money done up in a big bundle, and then Buck and me takes the journalist reporter around to another door and we let ourselves into one of the office rooms.

"Now, my literary friend," says Buck, "take a chair, and keep still, and I'll give you an interview. You see before you two grafters from Graftersville, Grafter County, Arkansas. Me and Pick have sold brass jewelry, hair tonic, song books, marked cards, patent medicines, Connecticut Smyrna rugs, furniture polish, and albums in every town from Old Point Comfort to the Golden Gate. We've grafted a dollar whenever we saw one that had a surplus look to it. But we never yet went after the simoleon in the toe of the sock under the loose brick in the corner of the kitchen hearth. There's an old saying you may have heard—'fassily decency averni'—which means it's an easy slide from the street faker's dry goods box to a desk in Wall Street. We've took that slide, but we didn't know exactly what was at the bottom of it. Now, you ought to be wise, but you ain't. You've got New York wiseness, which means that you judge a man by the outside of his clothes. That ain't right. You ought to look at the lining and seams and the button-holes. While we are waiting for the patrol wagon you might get out your little stub pencil and take notes for another funny piece in the paper."

And then Buck turns to me and says: "I don't care what Atterbury thinks. He only put in brains, and if he gets his capital out he's lucky. But what do you say, Pick?"

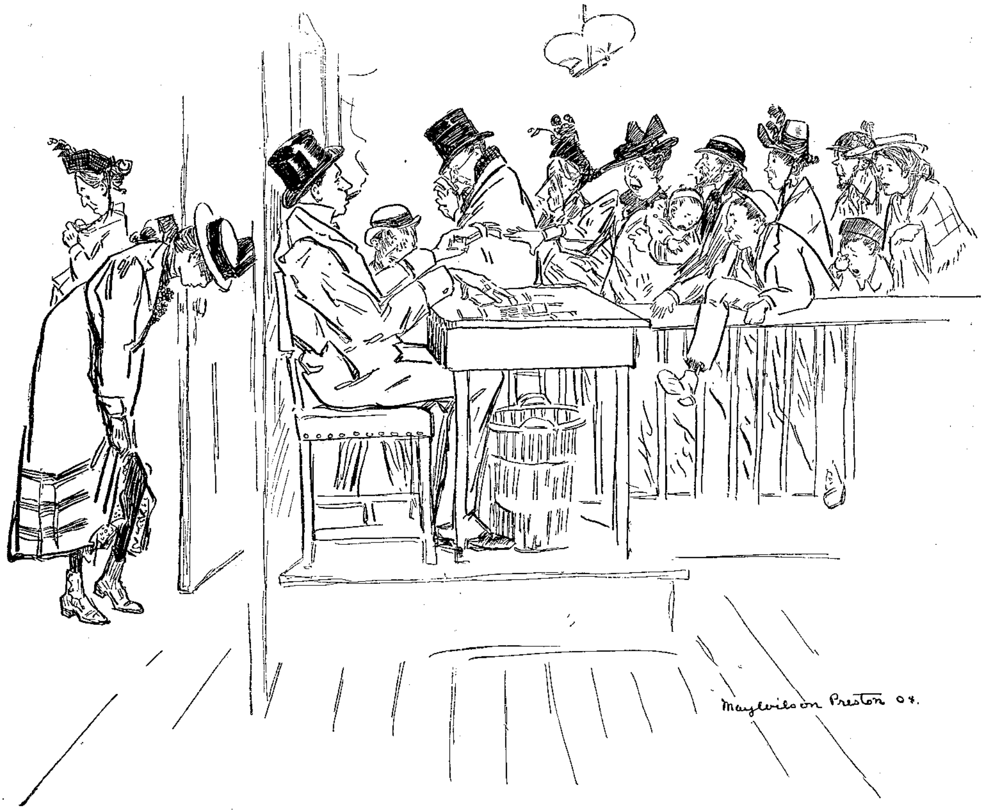
"Me?" says I. "You ought to know me, Buck. I didn't know who was buying the stock."

"All right," says Buck. And then he goes through the inside door into the main office and looks at the gang trying to squeeze through the railing. Atterbury and his hat was gone. And Buck makes 'em a short speech.

"All you lambs get in line. You're going to get your wool back. Don't shove so. Get in a line—a *line*—not in a pile. Lady, will you please stop bleating? Your money's waiting for you. Here, sonny, don't climb over that railing; your dimes are safe. Don't cry, sis; you ain't out a cent. Get in *line*, I say. Here, Pick, come and straighten 'em out and let 'em through and out by the other door."

Buck takes off his coat, pushes his silk hat on the back of his head, and lights up a reina victoria. He sets at the table with the boodle before him, all done up in neat packages. I gets the stockholders strung out and marches 'em, single file, through from the main room; and the reporter man passes 'em out the side door into the hall again. As they go by, Buck takes up the stock and the Gold Bonds, paying 'em cash, dollar for dollar, the same as they paid in.

The shareholders of the Golconda Gold Bond and Investment Company can't hardly believe it. They almost grabs the money out of Buck's hands. Some of the women keep on crying, for it's a custom of the sex to cry when they have sorrow, to weep when they have joy, and to shed tears whenever they find themselves without either.


Mayfield Preston 04.

"The shareholders of the Golconda Gold Bond and Investment Company can't hardly believe it"

The old women's fingers shake when they stuff the skads in the bosom of their rusty dresses. The factory girls just stoop over and flap their dry goods a second, and you hear the elastic go "pop" as the currency goes down in the ladies' department of the "Old Domestic Lisle-Thread Bank."

Some of the stockholders that had been doing the Jeremiah act the loudest outside had spasms of restored confidence and wanted to leave the money invested. "Salt away that chicken feed in your duds and skip along," says Buck. "What business have you got investing in bonds? The tea-pot or the crack in the wall behind the clock for your hoard of pennies."

When the pretty girl in the red shawl cashes in Buck hands her an extra twenty.

"A wedding present," says our treasurer, "from the Golconda Company. And say—if Jakey ever follows his nose, even at a respectful distance, around the corner where Rosa Steinfeld lives, you are hereby authorized to knock a couple of inches of it off."

When they was all paid off and gone, Buck calls the newspaper reporter and shoves the rest of the money over to him.

"You begun this," says Buck; "now finish it. Over there are the books, showing every share and bond issued. Here's the money to cover, except what we've spent to live on. You'll have to act as receiver. I guess you'll do the square thing on account of your paper. This is the best way we know how to settle it. Me and our substantial but apple-weary vice-president are going to follow the example of our revered president, and skip. Now, have you got enough news for to-day, or do you want to interview us on etiquette and the best way to make over an old taffeta skirt?"

"News!" says the newspaper man, taking his pipe out; "do you think I could use this? I don't want to lose my job. Suppose I go round to the office and tell 'em this happened. What'll the managing editor say? He'll just hand me a pass to Bellevue and tell me to come back when I get cured. I might turn in a story about a sea serpent wiggling up Broadway, but I haven't got the nerve to try 'em with a pipe like this. A get-rich-quick—excuse me—gang giving back the boodle! Oh, no. I'm not on the comic supplement."

"You can't understand it, of course," says Buck, with his hand on the door knob. "Me and Pick ain't Wall Streeters like you know 'em. We never allowed to swindle sick old women and working girls and take nickels off of kids. In the lines of graft we've worked we took money from the people the Lord made to be buncoed—sports and rounders and smart Alecks and street crowds, that always have a few dollars to throw away, and farmers that wouldn't ever be happy if the grafters didn't come around and play with 'em when they sold their crops. We never cared to fish for the kind of suckers that bite here. No, sir. We got too much respect for the profession and for ourselves. Good-by to you, Mr. Receiver."

"Here!" says the journalist reporter; "wait a minute. There's a broker I know on the next floor. Wait till I put this truck in his safe. I want you fellows to take a drink on me before you go."

"On you?" says Buck, winking solemn. "Don't you go and try to make 'em believe at the office you said that. Thanks. We can't spare the time, I reckon. So long."

And me and Buck slides out the door; and that's the way the Golconda Company went into involuntary liquefaction.

If you had seen me and Buck the next night you'd have had to go to a little bum hotel over near the West Side ferry landings. We was in a little back room, and I was filling up a gross of six-ounce bottles with hydrant water colored red with aniline and flavored with cinnamon. Buck was smoking, contented, and he wore a decent brown derby in place of his silk hat.

"It's a good thing, Pick," says he, as he drove in the corks, "that we got Brady to loan us his horse and wagon for a week. We'll rustle up a stake by then. This hair tonic'll sell right along over in Jersey. Bald heads ain't popular over there on account of the mosquitoes."

Directly I dragged out my valise and went down in it for labels.

"Hair tonic labels are out," says I. "Only about a dozen on hand."

"Buy some more," says Buck.

We investigated our pockets and found we had just enough money to settle our hotel bill in the morning and pay our passage over the ferry.

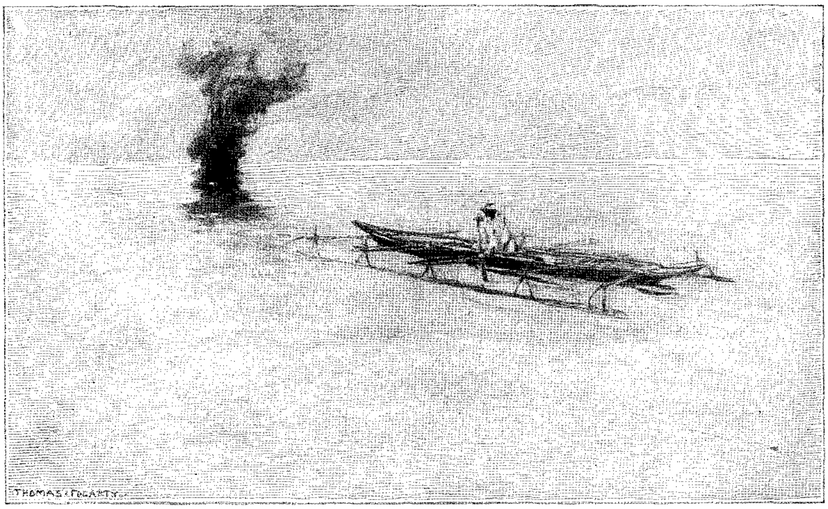
"Plenty of the 'Shake-the-Shakes Chill Cure labels," says I, after looking.

"What more do you want?" says Buck. "Slap 'em on. The chill season is just opening up in the Hackensack low grounds. What's hair, anyway, if you have to shake it off?"

We pasted on the Chill Cure labels about half an hour and Buck says:

"Making an honest living's better than that Wall Street, anyhow; ain't it, Pick?"

"You bet you," says I.



THE COMING OF THE MAESTRA

BY

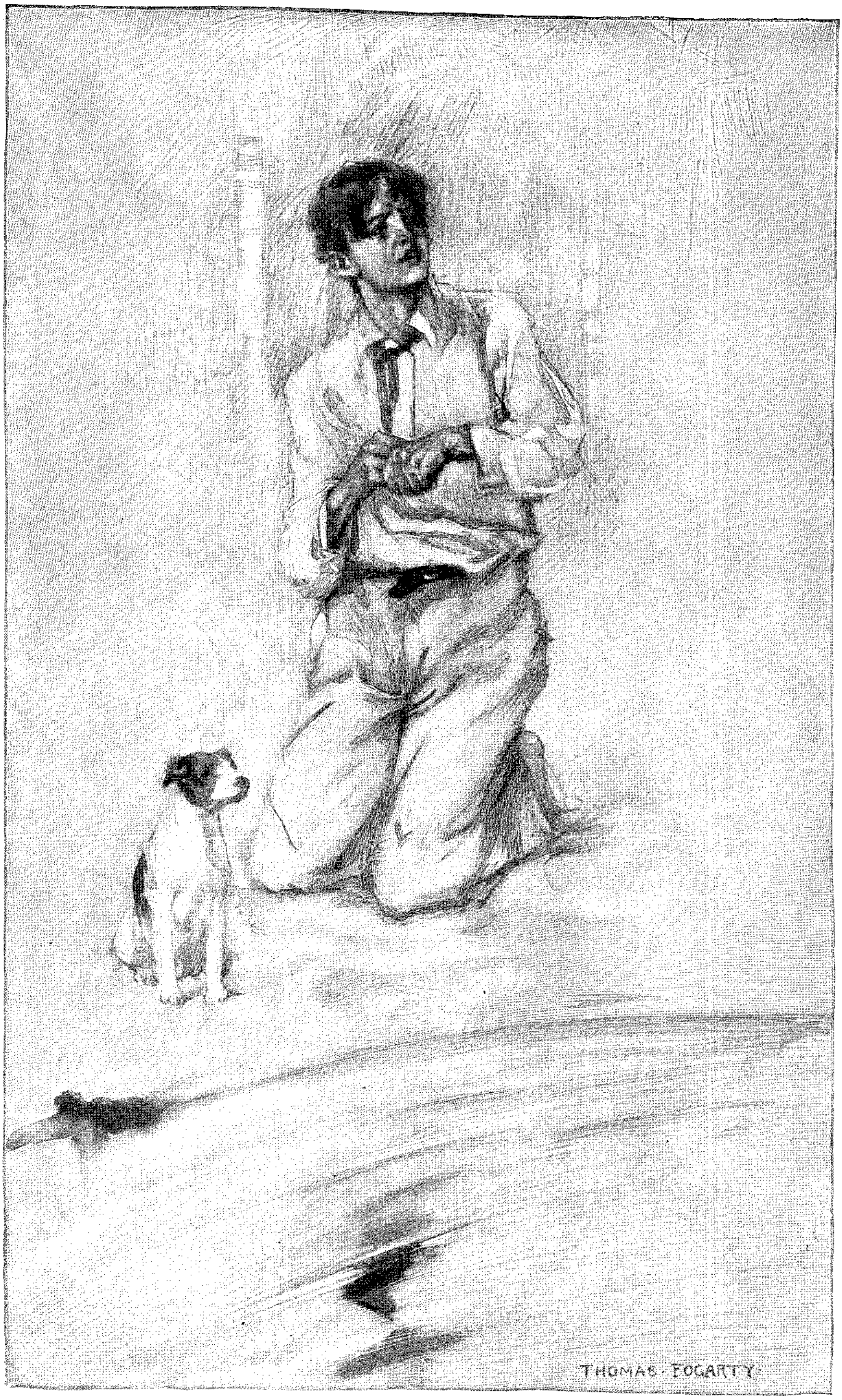
JAMES HOPPER

AUTHOR OF "THE CALL," "THE FAILURE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS FOGARTY

AS the prao, its two wide outriggers spread out on each side like wings, its sail rising above straight and stiff like a backfin, skimmed over the white-capped crests like a gigantic flying-fish, the Maestro, his white suit gleaming like armor in the sun, stood at the peak, erect and tense like a Viking of old. But he was madder than any Viking had ever been.

For three long days he had been on that prao, while it tacked and beat against a monsoon that was southern, although, according to the dictates of the almanac and the Maestro's own ardent desires, it should have been northern. For three days, trying to make Ilo-Ilo, thirty miles across the strait, the little craft, with its crew clinging like monkeys at the ends of the outriggers, had darted right and left like a startled and very dizzy gull, while from the rudimentary rudder, where sat the Maestro, there poured forth a stream of most piratical objurgations. Neither these spiritual pleas, however, nor the mad flurries of the flat-bottomed boat had prevailed against the wind's blustering stubbornness, and at length they had turned tail and run before it, and now the Maestro was looking upon a golden strip of beach and a curtain of coconut palms, behind which peeped the nipa roofs of his own little pueblo. In a few minutes more the prao, balanced upon a white-curling swell, had slid its nose up upon the sand, and the Maestro, with a great leap, found himself at the identical spot from which, three days before, his heart a-pound with strange tumult, he had embarked, too impatient to wait for the lazy


THOMAS FOGARTY

"'It's that Japanese coal, that darned Japanese coal'" little steamer which offered regular, if slow passage, once a week.

"Thunder!" said the Maestro, as his foot struck the sand. "Thunder! a deuce of a bridegroom I make, I do!"

But Tolio, his muchacho, who had stayed behind in guard of the house, was running down the beach toward him, waving a dirty piece of paper. It was a telegram, transmitted by carrier from Bacolod, which was in cable communication with Ilo-Ilo. The Maestro read it quickly; then he re-read it aloud, pausing upon each word as if to sink its dread significance deep into his dazed brain.

"Have missed you in Ilo-Ilo. Am coming on to-morrow's steamer.—Girlie."

Behind the Maestro a cast-up log was bleaching in the sun and he sat down upon it very suddenly and limply, as if his bony carcass had turned to water. "Lordie," he murmured, "and the sky-pilot gone south!"

And truly the situation was a delicate one. For "Girlie" of the telegram was none other than Miss Florence Yeats, come ten thousand miles over the sea to be his bride. He should have met her in Ilo-Ilo, where the whole American population had made gleeful preparations for the event; but his uncalculating impatience and the immoral conduct of the winds had foiled him in his attempted crossing of the straits from his own town in Negros; and now she was coming by the day's steamer—with the sky-pilot, otherwise Rev. David Houston, head of the United Protestant Missions of Negros, who might have afforded a much-needed alternative, far, far away on an inspection tour to the southern stations of the island, and not likely to be back for a month.

So the Maestro remained on his log, inwardly tossed by a cyclone of contradictory feelings. He could but admire the splendid confidence of the girl, coming straight to him without a question after he had failed her, failed her in an appointment to be classed among those, well, of higher importance. At the same time it did seem to him that some kind person in Ilo-Ilo might have warned her of the fact that he was absolutely the only white man in his town, and at that neither a clergyman nor justice of the peace. He did not rise and go home, where he could have spent a very profitable hour changing his bedraggled garments and washing his salt-grimed face. The crisis was too near for that. The little wheezy tea-pot of a steamer, with its precious and disturbing freight, was due in anywhere from one to four hours; and he would not have missed the sight of its first smoky signal at the horizon for luxuries much more dazzling. So, joyful and unhappy, expectant and horrified, he sat there, while Jack, his little fox-terrier, who had come down with Tolio, romped unappreciated between his legs. Out a few hundred yards from shore, planted upon a submerged sand bar, a long bamboo fish-corral screened the horizon; and the Maestro recited mentally to himself the approach of the little steamer. The smoke would first appear at the lower end, then slowly would crawl along behind the high paling, slowly, very slowly, till finally the ship itself would burst into view past the upper end, and stand for shore. And then——

But it was a good hour before the Maestro finally rose to his feet. "Ah," he said, "here she comes."

Behind the fish-corral, at its lower end, a thin thread of vapor was mounting toward the sky. The Maestro's heart expanded queerly within his breast. But as he looked, behind the exasperating barrier a big yellow ring, as from some gigantic pipe, rose slowly, then another that broke through the first, and a third that enveloped them all in one ugly smother.

"Good golly," ejaculated the Maestro, "but the little kettle is steaming!"

And the smoke, beginning to crawl along the corral, ceased puffing up in rings; it rose in one dense, funnel-shaped cloud. "It's that soft Japanese coal," murmured the Maestro, "that darned Japanese coal!"

But with eyes staring ahead, as if hypnotized, he was walking down the beach. A ripple washed over his feet, then a curling comber splashed up to his knees; but he took another step, unconscious of the water now about his hips.

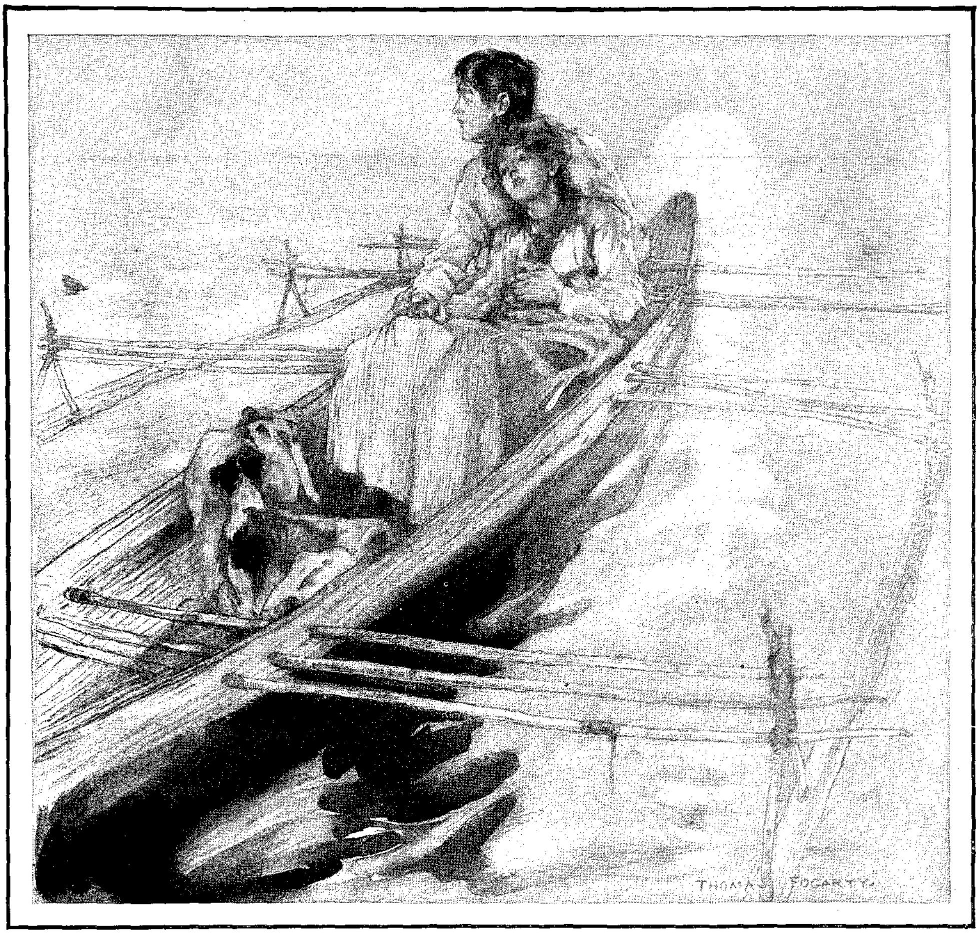
Suddenly he turned, and was running back up the beach toward a shed full of drying copra. He climbed one of the thick corner-posts to the roof. The nipa thatch gave beneath his weight, and it was on changing ground with fierce plunging stride that he looked out to sea. But he was not high enough. The fish-corral still made inscrutable the mystery behind, and he could see only the smoke, now a sooty black, rising in heavy volutes to the green sky.

He slid down and paced the sand, trying to calm himself. But the smoke, ever more voluminous and threatening, allowed him no peace. He ran back farther up the shore to a coconut palm and tried to climb the lithe, slippery trunk. The notches cut by the monkey-like tuba-men were too far apart; the silvery bark was like a greased pole. Twice he went up some twenty feet, only to slip, fighting and clawing, clear back to the ground again. He tore off his shoes and started up again, cutting his feet, scratching and biting in a frenzy of impotent effort. He went up higher this time, and then the slender elastic trunk began to sway back and forth gracefully, dizzying him, making it difficult merely to hold on; and with bitterness he realized that the northern monsoon was now on, the wind for which he had prayed in vain for three days. He could go no higher, and still he could not see what was happening behind that stolid barrier of bamboo poles out at sea, only the black threat of the smoke, now drifting south like a great piratical banner, and he slid back to the ground, full of a terrible unsatiated curiosity.

He looked down at his feet, torn and bloody, at his disordered clothing, and noticed with strange, objective curiosity that his whole body was trembling as if palsy-stricken. "Oh, shucks," he said, pulling himself together; "I guess it's all right. It's that Japanese coal, that darned Japanese coal." He sat down upon the sand, trying to keep command over himself, but his hands, independently of his will, began wringing each other between his knees. And then he was up and running along the crazy, sagging wharf, his dog barking playfully at his heels. At the end he found a banca, a little, narrow dug-out, steadied with long out-riggers. He sprang into it, cast off the rotten piece of rope, seized the only paddle, and shoved off with one big heave. He swirled the boat's nose around till it pointed at the upper end of the corral, then bent down to mad toil, slapping the water in vibrating rhythm. And as he strained, his whole strength in each stroke, his eyes, round with terrible curiosity, followed the smoke as it crawled slowly along the corral, blacker, denser, more significant every moment. For a while he was in the smooth water, in the shelter of the northern cape, but ahead he could see the monsoon tearing the liquid surface into white shreds. He bore up and was soon in the midst of it, the short waves pounding the flanks of the boat, the spray spitting spitefully into his eyes. He added a new frenzy to his efforts, and then he shot past the end of the fish-corral and saw.

Not a quarter of a mile away, the ship was coming toward him, and it was a phantom ship. Of the material thing, of the fabric of wood and iron, there showed nothing; but from what was about the height of the deck a cataract of smoke poured down the sides in opalescent plays of grays and blacks till it met the water and rebounded, banking up in rolling, shifting gauze about the ship-nucleus hidden within, while, above, the monsoon seized the vapor, shaping it with twists and whirls into a huge, flaccid, black hand suspended like a curse in the sky. A sudden great calmness came over the Maestro. Wavering from side to side, as if the craft itself were staggering beneath the horror of the thing, the whole fantasmagoric fabric was coming toward him; and with slow, deliberate stroke he paddled to meet it, his eyes searching for a clew of the conditions, his mind working to meet them. The air became vibrant with a low growl, split with explosive cracklings, and, in the inky smother at the bow, little red tongues flashed up and out. He twisted his canoe around till its nose pointed with the course of the approaching vessel and waited, keyed up to some last possible opportunity that must be met swiftly and unerringly. And then the steamer passed slowly above him. A cataract of smoke poured down upon him, a hot, furnace-breath whelmed him with its fevered exhalation; and he was paddling madly beneath the stern, peering into the trailing smoke. A more furious puff of the monsoon tore the thing to shreds, and then he saw the boat's population. They were clustered at the stern, hanging to poop-rail and rope and molding and anchor chain and to each other like a troop of panic-stricken apes at a river crossing, snarling and fighting for the safer positions. But on the deck behind them, apart in the spiritual retirement of higher nature and greater courage, was a slim, blue-garbed form. She was standing straight and proudly, her skirts, gathered in her left hand in a familiar movement, drawn close about her, away from that defiling moral puddle of humanity.

"Girlie!" he shouted, his whole being going out to her.



"they drifted on upon the flashing sea"

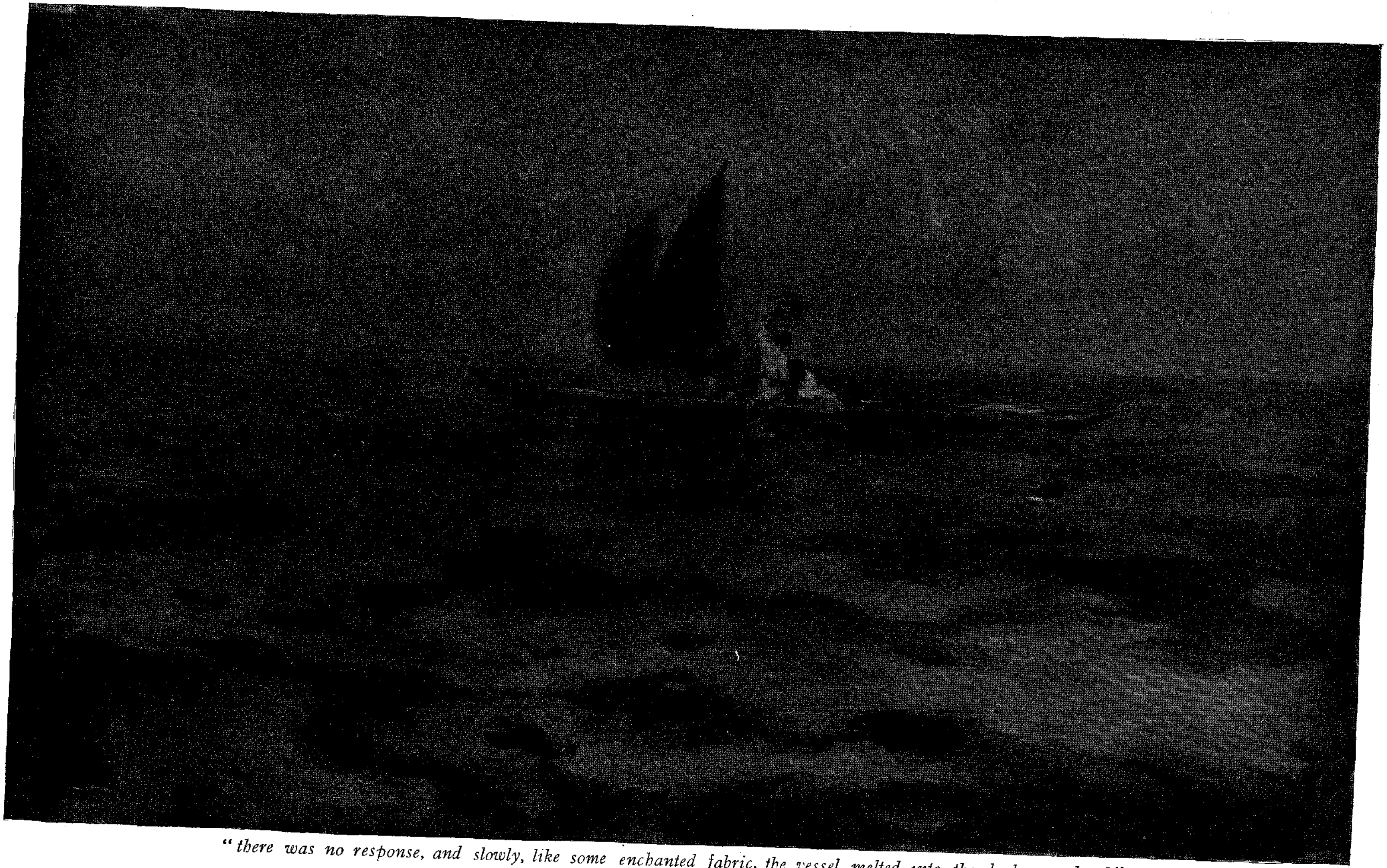
"Lad!" came back the answer, clear and true. She moved forward a step, her arms stretched gropingly before her.

"Jump! Jump! Jump!" he commanded. "Jump!"

She took another step and with unhesitating confidence leaped out into the void.

She disappeared beneath the water; he sent the banca ahead with two long strokes, and then she rose to the surface alongside. He leaned over and, passing both arms below hers, he let her float back to the stern of the boat. But before raising her he suddenly let go with his right arm, seized the paddle, and hit at the water a blow that struck some slimy, slippery body. Then with a great effort he raised her into the boat and laid her down gently. For a moment he did not look at her but gazed behind, shuddering, at a sharp fin cutting the water behind in a circle.

When he turned to her she was standing, and the light of their eyes met in a spiritual caress. Slowly his arms spread out in an unconscious movement and with a little choking cry she threw herself upon him, hiding her face on his breast, while his arms closed about her. "I knew you would be there," she murmured. He clasped her a little closer, and they stood there on their crazy little craft, in the clash of waters, wrapped together into one being, the shudder of the past uniting them in the same thrill, the ecstasy of the present stealing through their veins like bubbling wine. A squall had the little boat in its grasp; it passed above in the upper layers of air with great sharp cries; the boat drifted madly down the coast and away from it; but they knew of no danger, knew only that they were in each other's arms, that the past was fading away from them like a gone and



"there was no response, and slowly, like some enchanted fabric, the vessel melted into the darkness ahead" impotent nightmare. Vague and faint, a sound like the bursting of a paper bag came to his ears, and toward the shore he saw with eyes that did not understand incongruous objects falling from the sky—a twisted smokestack, half of a jolly-boat, a bucket, boards, a multitude of smaller shredded bits, and aperch on the reef was a shell of a ship, undecked, the blackened interior opened to the skies, pouring out a cone of black smoke. He held her closer, her eyes against his breast, and a palm-lined cape drifted past, hiding the thing from view, hiding the last vestige of what had happened, and they slid on into the illimitable sea, into the future of far horizons.

After a while she disengaged herself a bit and, toying with the middle button of her jacket, "You love me a whole lot, don't you?" she asked in a question that was not a question.

"Yes, little girl," he answered obediently.

There was another long silence and the boat drifted another two hundred yards.

"Oh, what a pretty dog!" she exclaimed, for her eyes had been wandering below his arms. "Is it yours?"

And then he became aware of Jack beneath the thwart, whining, with eye apologetic and tail conciliatory, in the warring impulses of friendliness and prudent modesty. She stooped down with inviting gesture, and the pup, with a little yelp, leaped into her arms. The Maestro looked down upon them, a little jealousy in his approving smile. But the interruption had suddenly made him alive to the situation.

"Jehosophat!" he exclaimed, looking at the now distant shore, down which and away from which they were drifting at an uncomfortably rapid rate; "it's about time to pull in!"

But this very same remark was not immediately followed by action. The Maestro was looking blankly at the bottom of the canoe where lay what once had been a paddle, but was now only a handle without blade. The memory of the manner in which this transformation had taken place sent his eyes back over the water behind, and a frown came on his face. Right and left, with a movement regular as that of a sentinel pacing his beat, a black fin like a butcher's cleaver was cutting the water.

"What's the matter, lad?" asked the young lady, still stooping over the dog, and astonished at the silence. "Can't you find the oars?"

"Well, no; fact is—these boats have no oars."

"Oh," cried the bride, immediately interested by this picturesque fact, and rising to her feet; "don't they have any oars? How do you make them go?"

"Paddle them, usually," answered the groom ruefully.

Her eyes fell upon the lamentable remains of the lone paddle, and suddenly the air was athrill with a joyous laughing peal.

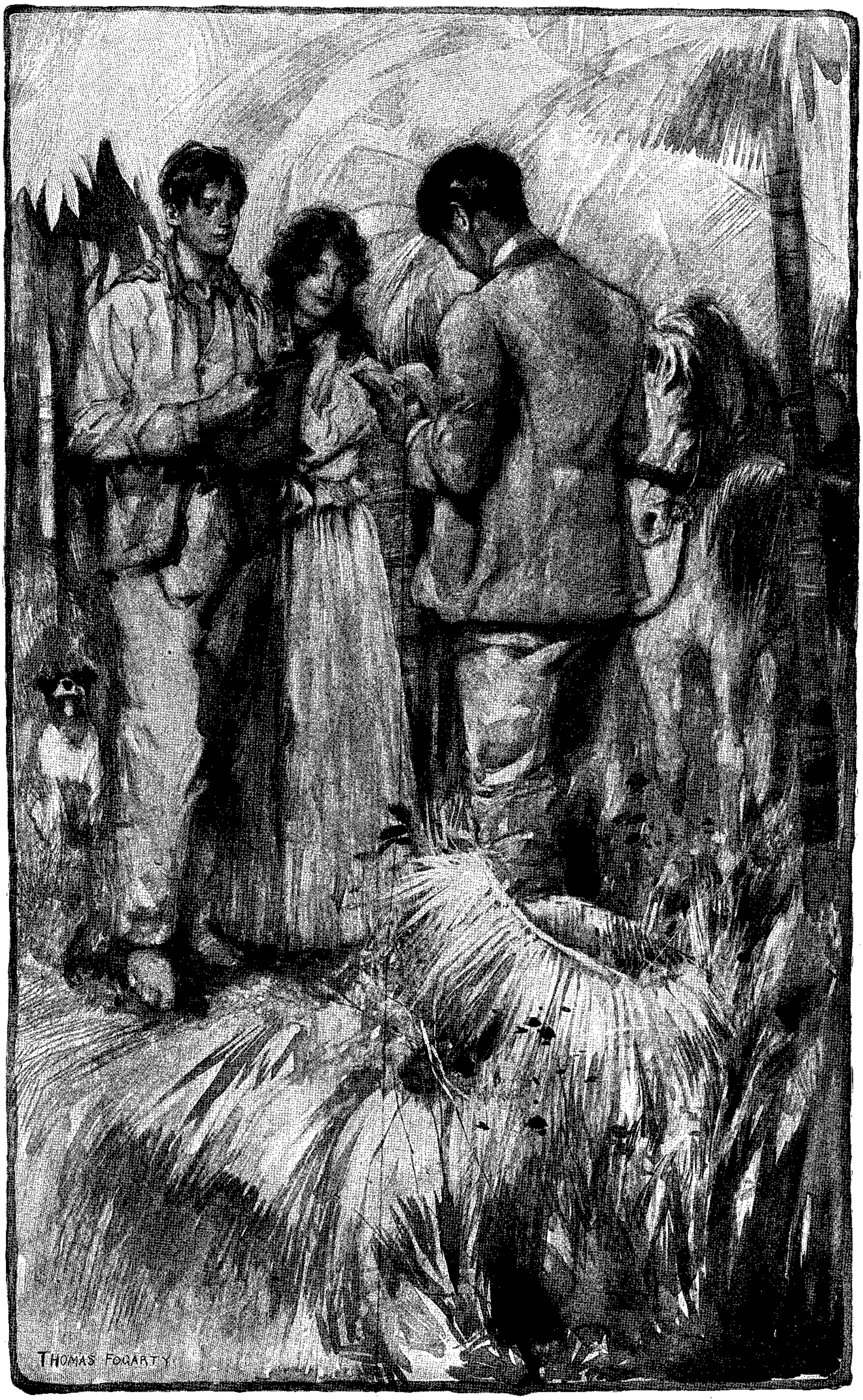
"Oh, how jolly!" she exclaimed. "We're shipwrecked, aren't we? We'll go away out in the ocean, won't we? Isn't this a land of adventure, though!"

"Well rather," said the Maestro dryly.

And there being nothing else to do, he sat down at the bottom of the boat and drew her to his knees. She, with feminine altruism, completed the chain by taking Jack upon hers, and they drifted on upon the flashing sea. "It's just delicious," murmured the bride, feeling the warm tropical sun drying her clothes upon her. But the groom did not chime in. He was thinking.

There was no immediate danger in the situation, but the prospects for the future were hardly to be termed "delicious." The monsoon that, probably aided by the tide-current, was sweeping them on, had not yet kicked up much of a sea and seemed to be abating in strength; and the little banca, buoyant like a cork upon its outriggers, rode the waves with cheerful alacrity. The spray that now and then dashed upon them was blood-warm and occasioned no discomfort, and their wet clothes were fairly steaming under the rays of the tropical sun. Still they were drifting steadily, with the island of Panay some thirty miles to their right, Negros to their left, with its shores, diverging from their course, farther and farther away. They might drift on thus between the islands without touching either of them for days, till out into the China Sea, though the lack of food made even that undelightful alternative but a vague one. As for the chances of meeting a vessel, they were slighter still, only a few lorchas plying between the islands at long intervals. And then there was the grim diagnosis of the being with the fin, swimming back and forth, back and forth, behind the boat, with ominous patience.

"If we're shipwrecked, we ought to be doing something," said the bride suddenly,


THOMAS FOGARTY

"'*Whom God hath united let no man part*'" in the tone of one announcing the concluding clause of a syllogism.

"That's right," acquiesced the Maestro; "we ought to do something."

"We should empanel a jury," said the bride briskly.

"Empanel a jury," repeated the Maestro, somewhat dazed.

"Oh," said the bride, blushing, "I mean a jury-rudder. We should empanel a jury-rudder."

"You mean rig up a jury-rudder," exclaimed the Maestro, a flashing light of understanding in his eye; "rig is the more nautical term."

"Oh, yes," cried the bride delightedly; "that's it; we must rig up a jury-rudder!"

"Well," said the Maestro, after a moment's thought; "jury-rudders, you know, are rigged up when the real rudder has been carried away. But we never had a real rudder; therefore we can't very well have a jury one."

"Oh," said the bride, disappointed.

She was silent a moment, then inspiration again flamed up.

"We should signal a ship," she said decidedly.

"Signal a ship," repeated the Maestro, looking about him idiotically.

"Yes," said the bride; "put up the flag upside down in sign of distress."

"But we have no flag," said the groom hopelessly.

"Use my kerchief," said the bride resourcefully.

"Upside down?" queried the Maestro. "But there is no mast."

"Put up an oar," she said bravely.

"But there is no oar."

"Oh," she said, again discouraged.

There was another thoughtful silence; but she was not to be overwhelmed.

"We must get food," she said; "we must fish."

"That's right," chimed the Maestro resolutely; "we must fish. Have you any hooks?"

"I have pins," she said.

"I have string," he said.

He fumbled through his pockets and drew two pieces of sorry twine. She turned her back upon him, worked mysteriously at her garments, and handed him five pins. "Bend them into hooks," she said.

He kneeled down and, after pricking his fingers several times, succeeded in bending two pins against the thwart. He passed them through the ends of the twine, and they were the possessors of two fishing lines.

"You fish in front and I'll fish in back," she said; "that way we won't catch the same fish."

"No," said the Maestro, looking behind at the water where the black fin seemed playfully trying to cut its initials; "you fish at the bow and I'll fish at the stern."

They took their respective positions and cast conscientiously. Jack, interested, began to run from one to the other, barking. "S-s-s-h," hissed the Maestro; "you'll scare the fish!" But the warning evidently came too late; the fish refused to bite.

"I'm lonely," finally said a voice at the bow; "come here and talk to me while I fish."

The Maestro dropped his tackle with suspicious alacrity and went forward. The bride continued casting with a gradual diminuendo of enthusiasm.

"I don't think this is much fun, do you?" she pouted. "Let's stop."

So they sat down again, she on his knees, Jack in her arms. The wind was going down, the sun was less scorching, and it was pleasant and quiet. To the left the palm-lined shore showed farther and farther away; and they were still drifting in the grip of some stubborn current. Suddenly she was laughing, a quiet, self-contained peal at some pleasant thought hers only.

"It's dinner time," she said between two musical ripples.

"But you didn't catch any fish," he said.

She laughed again. "Bring me my grip," she ordered. And she pointed to a little dripping satchel, to which, with the tenacity of unconsciousness, she had clung throughout the crisis, and which now lay, unheeded, at the bottom of the boat.

He handed it to her; but when they went to open it, they found it locked, and she had lost the key.

He brought his knife out of his pocket and opened the blade.

"Oh, my poor grip," she exclaimed in dismay. But he slashed at it unsentimentally.

The interior was only slightly wet. Through the gaping hole she took a white lace-kerchief and spread it upon the center thwart. Again her hand went into the grip and successively she drew a little bottle of olives, four figs, three crackers, and a diminutive flask of milk. She arranged them daintily upon the cloth and then, sitting at the bottom of the boat with the table between them, face to face, they gaily dined together.

"Oh, I've eaten so much," she sighed at last, as she presented the last fig to Jack, who gulped it down trustingly. "I think I should have a nap, don't you?"

He took her up in his arms like a child and cradled her, but she did not sleep right away. Out in the China Sea ahead the sun was setting in gloomy splendor. They watched it till it was only a puddle of blood upon the waters; and then darkness dropped like a leaden curtain upon the shimmering sea. From all sides the horizon drew near in black walls, across which the heat-lightning wrote in rageful zigzags and signs of the cross. The wind had gone down still more and little waves slapped up against the sides of the boat like caresses. A great loneliness, half sweet, half bitter, descended upon them.

"I'm a little afraid, lad," she murmured. Jack began to whine and she took him up, then, cuddling closer, she went asleep. And the little boat drifted on in the illimitable darkness, the girl and the dog asleep, and the man awake with care and tenderness, while behind a phosphorescence streaked back and forth, back and forth, in ceaseless vigil.

Toward midnight he saw a light far to the left, fixed as if on shore, and he began shouting over the water. This awakened the girl and she joined her melodious halloo to his cries, while Jack barked wildly. But there came no response, and after a while they stopped and went back to their first position. Later, a sudden creaking in the silence startled him, and not a hundred feet away a lorcha was passing like a shadow, all sails set wing-and-wing, the helm lashed, with no man on the watch. Again he shouted and the voice of the girl and the bark of the dog joined him; but again there was no response, and slowly, like some enchanted fabric, the vessel melted into the darkness ahead. Then again the girl went asleep in his arms, the dog upon her knees, while he watched in the night and the silence, a great tenderness at his heart.

Later he must have gone asleep, for, when stirred by a murmur in his ear and a caress on his brow, he looked up into her eyes, the sky above was all green and rose with the dawn, and Jack was yelping madly at the bow. He started to get up but she detained him.

"No, sir; you mustn't look," she said; "I have a surprise for you." She placed her hands over his eyes and turned his head as he rose to his knees. "Now look!" she exclaimed, suddenly freeing him. And his eyes opened upon a line of coconut palms, with a golden thread of beach at their feet, not a hundred feet away.

He sprang out into the shallow water and pulled up the boat on shore. The sun was rising and they lay down on the sand, thawing their limbs, stiffened by the heavy night-dew, while Jack ran up and down the shore, barking at the rippling waves. It was a balmy morning; before them stretched the sea, a smooth shimmering gray sheet, with vague palpitations of darker hues; from behind came the scented exhalation of the land, and the mad barks of the dog, precipitated one upon the other, filled the air with a wild tumult of joy. A sweet lethargy stole through their veins; the problems of their existence, of their whereabouts, of food and shelter, of their return to his town were things for the future, for a far, remote, hazy future; the present had them in its enchantment.

After a while a little brown boy, a net over his shoulder, came singing down the beach. At the sight of the two strangers he turned and ran, but the Maestro was up and after him and had him in his strong arms before he could reach the shelter of the coconuts. A few words in his own patois and the soft voice of the white lady reassured the little savage, and he led them along a trail through the trees to a small barrio of tuba-gatherers. At the door of one of the huts the urchin's mother, an immense fat crone, greeted them. They climbed the rickety bamboo ladder into the dwelling and accepted the seat of honor, a sagging bamboo bench, while with many pitying exclamations at their plight, the rotund lady busied herself and stirred a most abominable smoke upon her cooking platform. When the repast was ready it was seen to consist of two eggs and a banana swimming in suspicious grease, but the visitors were not fastidious. Meanwhile the boy outside climbed a tall palm, and soon the glade was resounding with the whacks of bolos and the crash of coconuts tumbling to the ground. They drank the milk and ate the white meat and gently refused some atrociously fermented tuba pressed ardently to their lips. All this time the Maestro was busy with his questions and he found that they were on Negros, some thirty miles south of their town, with Bago, a large village, where they would be able to secure a caribao and cart only a few miles away.

So, as soon as was compatible with the somewhat deliberate Filipino courtesy, they started toward Bago, the whole population of the barrio watching them disappear through the trees. They soon struck the road and swung upon it. The sun, still low, dealt gently with the new arrivals, and the country was beautiful. To their left the flashing-green rice-fields sloped toward the sea, and the shimmering waters showed here and there through the curtain of palms. To their right the high sugar-cane, serried and plumed, throbbing mysteriously with small animal life, walled the view. They were somewhat dilapidated. The Maestro was barefooted and hatless, and his once-white suit hung lamentably upon his frame; the girl's hair had come loose and fell like a golden cataract down her back; but their hearts were purring with ineffable joy and everything was good. Hand in hand they strode along like children, stopping here and there to pick a flower and gaze into each other's eyes, while Jack raced madly now in front, now behind them.

After a while a horseman came into view down the golden ribbon of road, riding toward them. As he neared he showed as a white-jacketed cork-helmeted Caucasian upon a diminutive native pony. The Maestro was gazing intently at the approaching figure. Suddenly he stopped short, his mouth open in astonishment.

"Well, I'll be danged," he exclaimed, "if it isn't the sky-pilot!"

"The sky-pilot?" asked the girl, astonished by this strange demonstration.

"Sure," corroborated the Maestro; "that's Houston, the missionary."

"The missionary!" ejaculated the young lady. She turned toward the Maestro; the Maestro turned toward her, and their eyes met. A slight blush rose to her cheeks.

"What luck!" cried the Maestro fervently. "Here, you sit down here," he said, pointing to a little mound by the side of the road. And not waiting to see if his invitation had been accepted he rushed ahead toward the horseman.

The little pony was pulled up short, and the girl, sitting down with her eyes rigidly ahead, caught snatches of an animated conversation. Finally the missionary dismounted and the two men came toward her.

"Are you willing?" asked the missionary, as he stood, hat off, before her after the introduction. He was a young man, clean-shaven, very different from her preconceived idea of his kind, and there was a little gleam of fun in his blue eyes.

"Well—" she hesitated and looked intently at the tip of her foot, peeping beyond the bottom of her skirt. A cricket in the cane burst out in a shrill laugh. She raised her head and plunged her eyes steadily into those of the amused inquisitioner.

"I'm always willing to do what lad wishes," she said, placing her hand upon the Maestro's shoulder.

They moved beneath the shade of a bamboo thicket, and the missionary, standing before the boy and the girl, the bridle of his pony passed around his arm, read words out of a little book that he had taken from his saddle-bag.

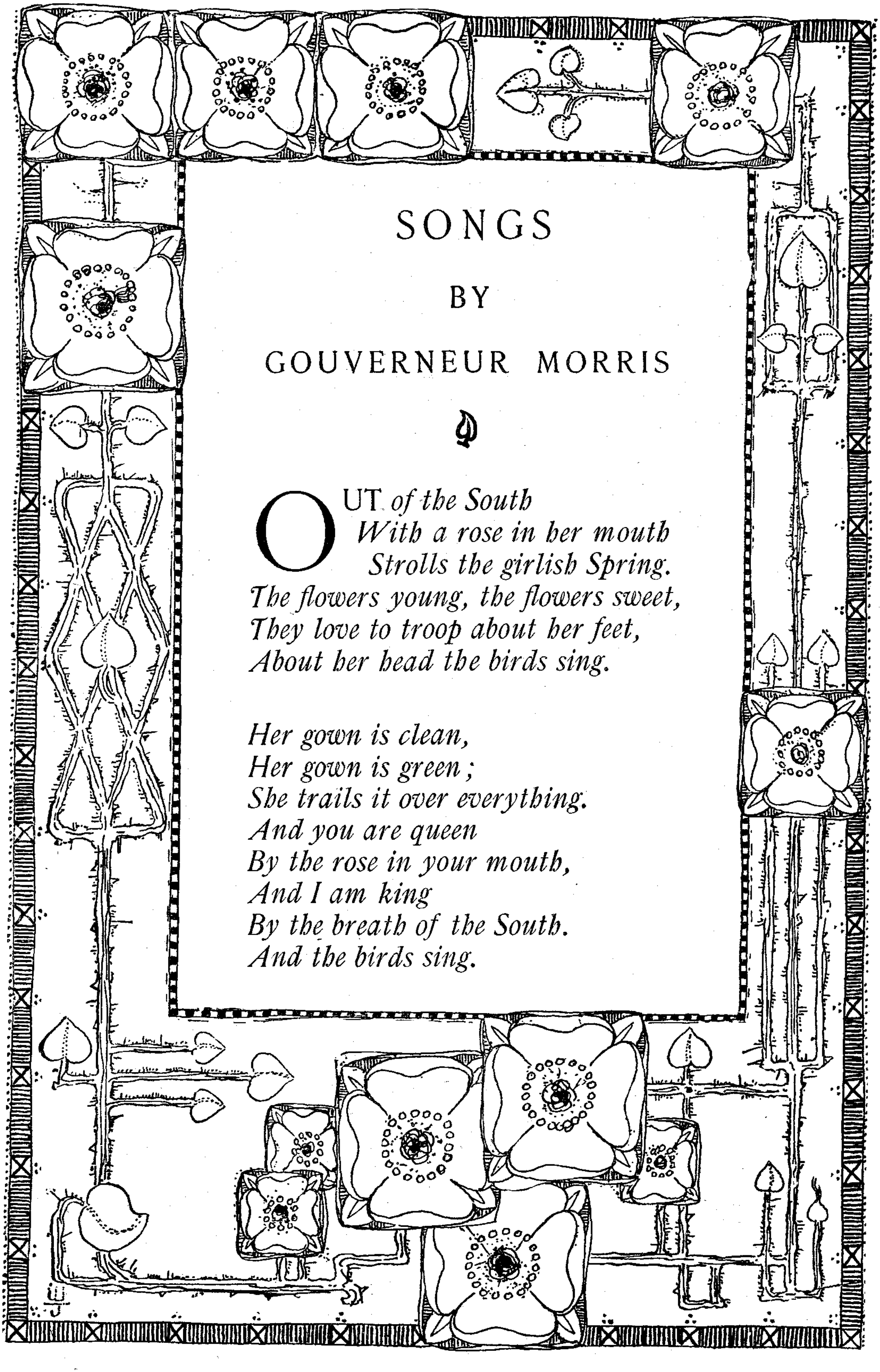
But before he had gone very far, the Maestro began to fumble at his jacket. With some difficulty he drew from some inward recess a little buckskin bag, and when the missionary, hesitating, stopped in the middle of a passage, the Maestro nodded his head encouragingly. "Go on; it's all right," he said, and he passed something that glittered upon the ring-finger of the girl.

"Whom God hath united let no man part," said the missionary. He closed his book, stepped forward, and kissed the girl on the forehead.

"That was well done," said the Maestro. And stepping up he also kissed the girl, but not on the forehead.

They stood together for a while, speaking in absent-minded tones, the missionary of his missions, the Maestro of his schools, and then the Maestro and the girl started on again toward Bago. But Houston did not mount right away. He stood looking at them as they walked along the road, side by side, as they were to be through life, the dog frisking gleefully at their heels. They came to a turn in the highway and with a sudden joyous skip they vanished behind the cane, hand-in-hand like children.

Houston rose slowly into his saddle. "Come on, little horse," he said kindly; "come on; we're not in this."



SONGS

BY

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

OUT *of the South*
With a rose in her mouth
Strolls the girlish Spring.
The flowers young, the flowers sweet,
They love to troop about her feet,
About her head the birds sing.

Her gown is clean,
Her gown is green;
She trails it over everything.
And you are queen
By the rose in your mouth,
And I am king
By the breath of the South.
And the birds sing.

SHE'S *all laughter, my goddess;*
Her name's Very Sweet,
And she's one Dearest Dear
From her head to her feet.
With her wonderful ways and her
wonderful eyes
She is all to me foolish and all to
me wise.

Less a girl than a goddess—
Here fancy proposes,
Not a goddess so much
As an armful of roses.
And all my world blooms with her,
since it all lies
In those wonderful ways and those
wonderful eyes.

She's all to me always,
That goes without saying;
My prayers are of her,
And they go without praying;
May sweet dreams possess her, may
fortune caress her!
Her name's Very Sweet, and my name
is God bless her.

A WINTER'S COURTING

BY

ALICE BROWN

AUTHOR OF "THE TREE OF A THOUSAND LEAVES," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAUDE AND GENEVIEVE COWLES

"KEEP the knittin' for take-up work," called Mrs. Bourne from the Sudleigh stage, where she sat regnant upon an underpinning of bags and packages. "Tack the spread as soon as ever you git round to it. Don't you leave the cake jar open, an' don't you let the squashes freeze."

"I'll 'tend to everything," cried Myra, with shrill sweetness. "Good-by, mother, good-by!"

Mrs. Bourne gave a stiff nod in return and the stage drove on. It was a three-seated vehicle, but she, the only passenger, seemed to overcrowd it by her portly presence. She wore the black clothes that had served her, since her husband's death, for intermittent mourning, and now she had shrouded her face from the November wind in a blue *barège* veil. Mrs. Bourne was loyal in her widowhood, but she could not think the worse of herself for this trifling inconsistency. It argued a fault in the weather, not in her. Yet, though her face was hidden away, Myra knew what domineering power looked from the deep-set eyes, and what lines had been graven about the mouth by the lifelong habit of a woman sworn to rule.

Myra glanced about at the sear autumn landscape and up at the bright sky, as if, her mother being gone, she owned a heritage. Then she ran into the house and went at once to the glass between the kitchen windows to settle her blown hair. It was long since she had taken a moment for leisurely acquaintance with herself—hardly, indeed, without guilt since her mother, years before, had caught her, with the soft hair about her shoulders, interrogating her image in the glass. Mrs. Bourne had, without comment, taken the kitchen shears from the table and remarked:

"You sit down in that chair."

Myra obeyed her, wonderingly, and snip! snip! the golden locks were quivering on the floor. Myra remembered now that she had screamed aloud in the terror of it, this murdering of her beauty, as if a hand were at her throat. But her mother had said, not unkindly, "Beauty is a snare," and set her to reading the verses in Proverbs commendatory of good women. The hair had grown again as thick and golden as before, but to this day Myra mourned that first lost mane, as if its preciousness in some way equaled the pang of parting from it. Since then, not daring to challenge a jealous eye, she had worn it braided in a hard smooth knot, and her mother, seeing that, concluded that vanity was dead in her. But now, in the wide sunny kitchen, humming with warmth, Myra snatched out the pins impetuously and let the glory tumble to her waist. Then she wreathed and twisted it in a fashion learned from passionate observation of summer visitors at church, and when she had finished, her delighted blue eyes met her enchantingly under the waving gold. She was smiling at herself in glad abandon when it suddenly came over her that her head befitted a holiday, and with a sudden daring, she ran up-stairs to her little cold bedroom and there slipped off her working calico and put on the blue cashmere made for Sunday wear. It was high in the neck, with a plain binding; but madness was upon her and she stole into the guest-room bureau and took out Great-aunt Nancy's lace fichu, turned in her dress, and fitted the lace about her sweet young throat. The vision smiled at her, and she caught her breath. It seemed well to sin for such an end as this.

It was the middle of the afternoon and she sat down by the kitchen window in the sun and felt her own delightfulness. At five she ate a light supper, and then settled herself by the hearth, holding a gift-book from the parlor table. It was bound in red morocco, and it gave her a sense of happy holiday. While she sat there in her dream, there was a footstep on the path. The knocker fell. Myra started to her feet. She was not afraid. It had not occurred either to her or to her mother that it was unsafe to keep the house alone. Holding the lamp in one hand, the red book tucked under her arm, she opened the door and peered out into the moonlit dusk. A man stood there.

"Why!" trembled Myra, backing away from him, "when'd you come back?"

"This mornin'," said Ansel Forbes. "Ain't you goin' to ask me in?"

Myra, her cheeks aflame, stepped aside and he followed her into the room. He was a handsome fellow with an upright carriage, strong features, and the eagle's glance.

"You've been gone quite a spell," said Myra, setting down the lamp.

"A year," he answered, casting time behind him as of no account. He threw off his coat, walked up to her, and took her trembling hands. They stood together before the fire, and Myra feared his look and loved it.

"What made you dress up?" asked Ansel. "Did you know I'd come?"

"No," said Myra, her head drooping. "Mother's gone away, an' I never have a chance to wear my blue cashmere in the house."

Ansel still held her hands. They struggled then a little, to withdraw themselves, and in response he bent and kissed her on the lips.

"Oh!" cried Myra, flushing to the hair. "Let me go, Ansel! Let me go!"

The faint plea challenged him.

"I won't," he said quietly and kissed her again.

Myra stood trembling, but not with fear or anger or any emotion hostile to him.

"You like me," he said, "you know you do. We should be married now, if your mother hadn't broke it off a year ago."

Myra's eyes were wet and pleading.

"You went away," she said irrelevantly.

"Course I went away. Do you s'pose I was goin' to stay here an' live 'longside o' you an' run the farm an' see you go nippin' by to meetin' with your mother an' never turn your head? No, sirree! I traveled up to Boston, an' I went into the express business an' I saved my money, an' when I heard your mother was goin' away to spend the winter with Lucy Ann, I threw up my business an' put for home."

"Lucy Ann's sick. She's got a bad knee," said Myra, waveringly, to gain time.

"Glad she has."

"Ansel!"

"Well, I am. One bad knee won't hurt her. She's got a good one, ain't she? An' I *am* glad. It's took your mother off the ground, an' I've got a chance to say my say."

"Mother thinks some of havin' Lucy Ann come home to live," said Myra, still shyly. "She got her lameness by bein' in the shoe-shop so long."

"Well, she better take her home to live. Lucy Ann's a widder, without chick nor child. Let her come home here, an' keep your mother company while you're living with me. Myra Bourne, you leave your hands where they be. If you don't, I'll kiss you again. Guess I will anyway." But in a moment he released her and pointed to a chair by the hearth. "You set down there," said he.

Myra did it, chiefly because her trembling would not let her stand. Then he stood before her and sometimes, in the stress of talk, turned away and walked back again.

"You stay there, Myra, while I expound the gospels. You've always minded, ain't you?"

"I've always minded mother."

"Yes. Well, that ain't turned out very well. Now you're goin' to mind me. An' you're goin' to keep on doin' it till I see you're a reformed character, an' then I'll mind you. After we've got settled down livin' together, we'll mind each other, turn an' turn about. But this is the way we're goin' to begin. I've got a horse out here. Now you get up an' put on your things an' we'll ride over to Parson True's an' get married."

Myra sprang to her feet. She looked the wild defensiveness of timid creatures.

"Why, Ansel Forbes!" she cried, "you're crazy."

"No, I ain't. Put on your things."

"Why, I wouldn't do such a thing, not if the world was to stop to-morrow."

"Why wouldn't you?"

"Mother wouldn't want I should. She don't mean me to marry, ever. She ain't very strong."

"Your grandmother! She's stronger'n you'll be if you ain't looked out for."

"She has rheumatism," ended Myra weakly.

"Lucy Ann's goin' to give up the factory an' come an' live with her, ain't she?"

"She may change her mind."

"Now, look here, Myra, I'll make a bargain with you. A winter ain't much to give up out o' one lifetime, is it? You just give this winter up to me."

Myra forgot herself.

"I'd give you all my lifetime if I could," she said.

"That's the talk. But s'pose you can't? S'pose your mother's comin' home along in March, an' you want to stay here with her? You just marry me now an' stay with me over'n my house till then. Then come spring, you can trot back here, an' live with your mother, an' I'll go back into the express business."

"But wouldn't you ever come home?" Myra asked incautiously.

"Not if you felt you'd better be here with your mother. But we'd have three months to look back on. That's a good deal, Myra, come to think of it. It's better'n growin' old alone an' wizenin' up an' thinkin' you ain't ever had your life as some folks have it."

"Yes," said Myra absently.

He took her hands and drew them up about his neck and Myra let them stay, though she seemed unconscious of them.

"I never heard of such a thing in my life," she said at last.

"What?"

"Doin' that—marryin'"—she blushed—"in that kind of a hit or miss fashion."

"No, I never heard of it either, but there's lots o' things we ain't heard on. We ain't so terrible knowin', if we were born in Sudleigh."

"Delia Mason was married last month. I stood up with her. It said 'for better, for worse.'"

"That's it, you see. With some folks it's all better. That means when they can keep right along with nothin' to part 'em. We ain't so lucky. With us, it's got to be 'worse.' Same thing, though."

"I don't know what Parson True'd say."

"It's all said. I see him on the way. He's goin' to set up till 'leven to wait for us. I got the license in my pocket."

"Ansel! You must be crazy."

Her hands dropped from his neck, but he put them back again.

"Parson True's been in it all along. He wrote to me off an' on. He promised he would. Little things, you know—whether you were sick, or dead, or takin' notice of anybody else."

"S'pose I had?"

"What?"

"S'pose there'd been anybody else. What did you mean to do?"

"Come home an' bust him. It's gettin' along in the evenin', Myra. I don't like to keep the old parson up."

"No! No!" said Myra, withdrawing herself. Her face had paled and the look of anticipation dulled out of her eyes. "Mother never'd overlook it in this world."

"She won't know it. She's forty miles away. Nobody writes to her from here. Like's not nobody'll find it out till she comes home. When she does, here you'll be waitin' for her, fire all built, supper on the table, an' you ready to fetch an' carry same as ever."

"But s'pose I should. Where——"

He interrupted her.

"Where we goin' to live? Right over in my house."

"It ain't been opened for a year."

"Well, it's open now. I brought along old Betsy from the Holler, an' she's cleanin' this minute, for all she's worth. There's a biler o' water on the stove an' Betsy's sluicin' down the walls. 'Taint as if I hadn't had it put in good repair that summer you said you'd marry me. Myra!" His voice compelled her. It was full of new, deep meanings. The woman in her leaped to meet that mastery.

"What is it, Ansel?" she asked timidly.

"Don't you like me?"

"Yes," she answered, so that he had to bend to hear. "Yes, I like you."

"How much? Well enough for that, if your mother'd let you?"

"Oh, yes! Yes!"

"Didn't you mind it when I went away?"

Myra answered with pathetic quiet, like a child.

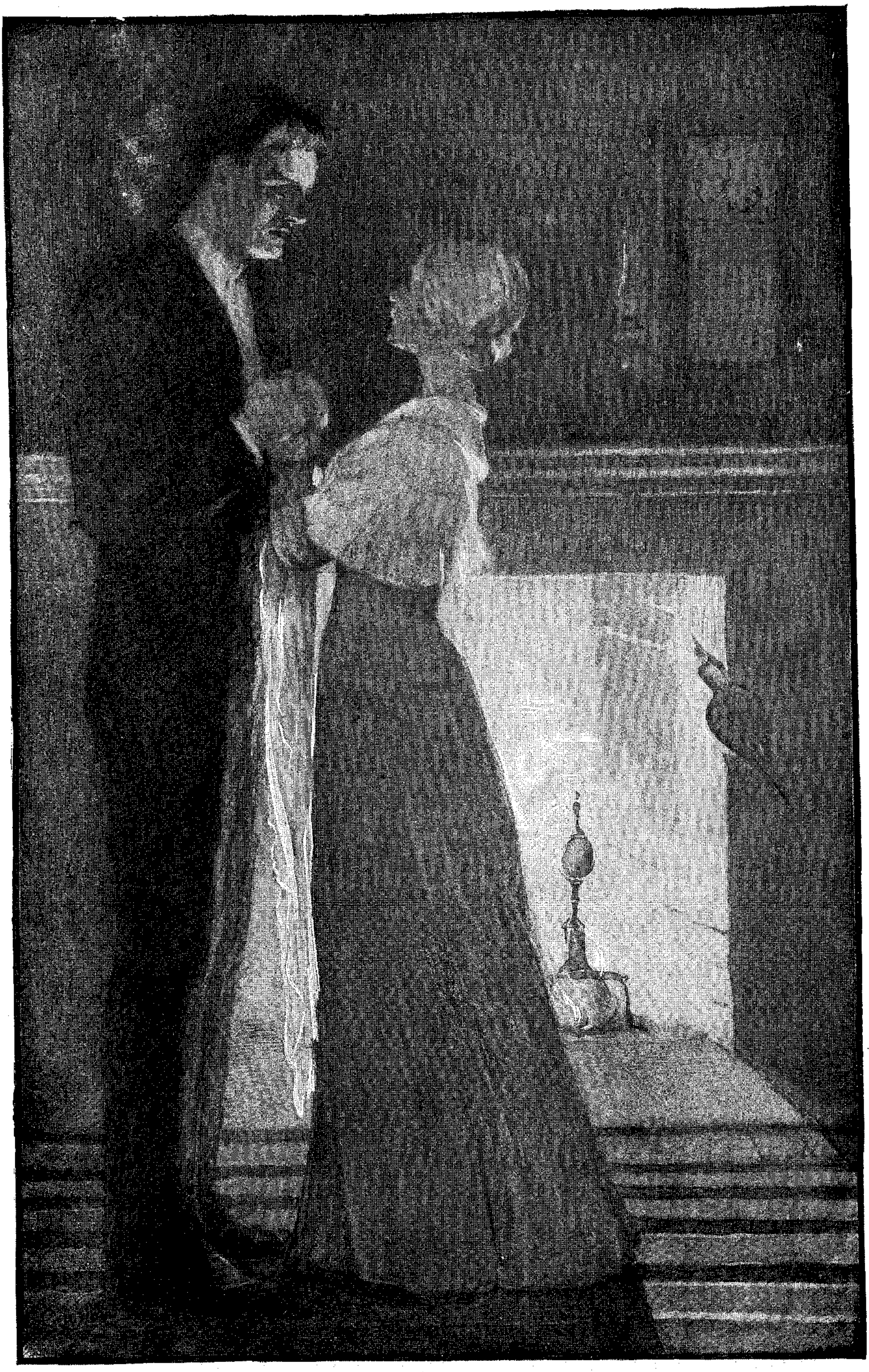
"I 'most died."

Ansel spoke now with a grave assurance, as at something argued out and finished.

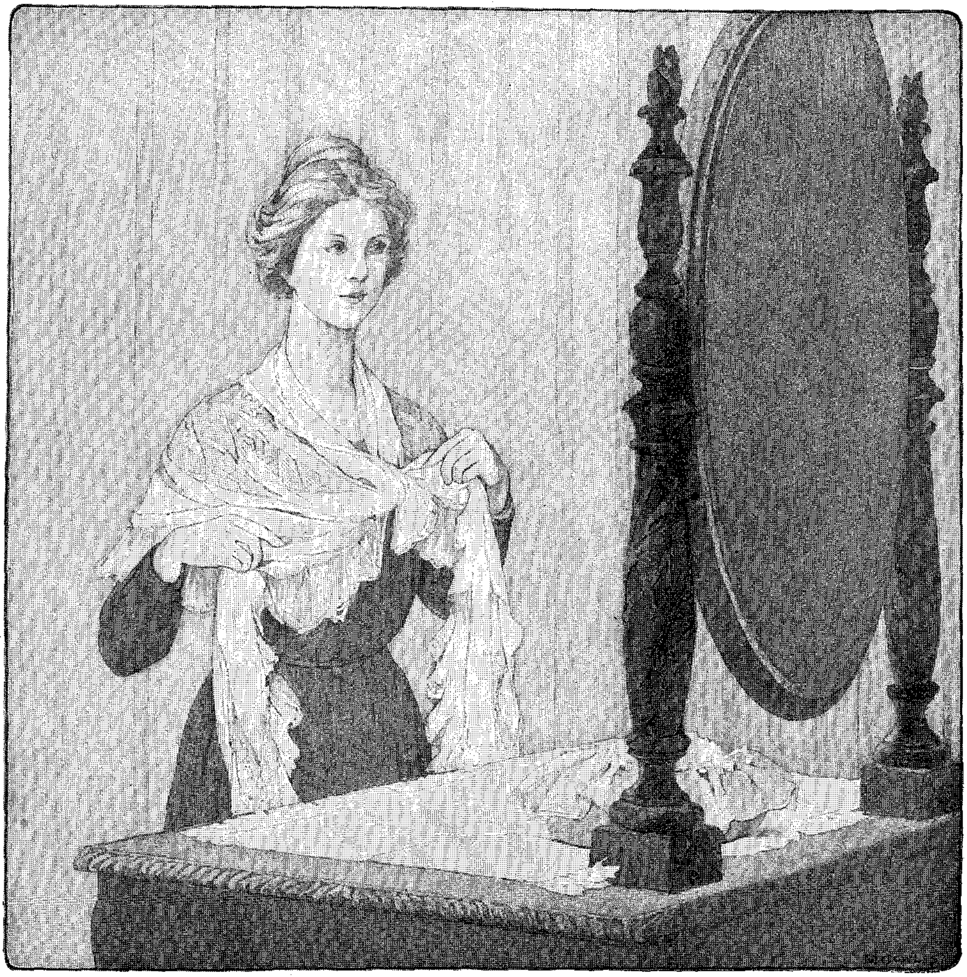
"Now, you get your hat, dear, an' I'll unblanket the horse." He was throwing his coat on as he spoke. Myra clasped her hands and almost wrung them.

"But, Ansel!" she cried. "I can't leave the house alone. Mother'd kill me."

"It's just to ride over to Parson True's."



"*They stood together before the fire, and Myra feared his look and loved it*"



"The vision smiled at her"

"I don't mean that. I mean all the time."

"You won't have to to-night. Betsy won't be through cleanin' for a couple o' days. I'll leave you here till then. I won't stay here, dear, nor eat a meal o' victuals. After we're settled down over to my place, we can run over two or three times a day an' keep track o' things. Get your hat, dear."

Myra turned in pale obedience, and brought out her hat and jacket from the closet under the stairs. Ansel was waiting for her gravely, hat in hand.

"You better bundle up," said he. "It's awful cold. I'll unhitch the horse."

When Myra ran down the walk to the gate, her breath came sharply and her throat was dry. It was like a dream and she would not have been surprised to find the "out-doors" empty and Ansel gone. But he was there. He lifted her into the wagon, sprang in beside her, and they drove away. Once or twice she opened her lips, to argue or remonstrate, but he only answered from his muffling coat collar:

"You better not talk. It's terrible cold."

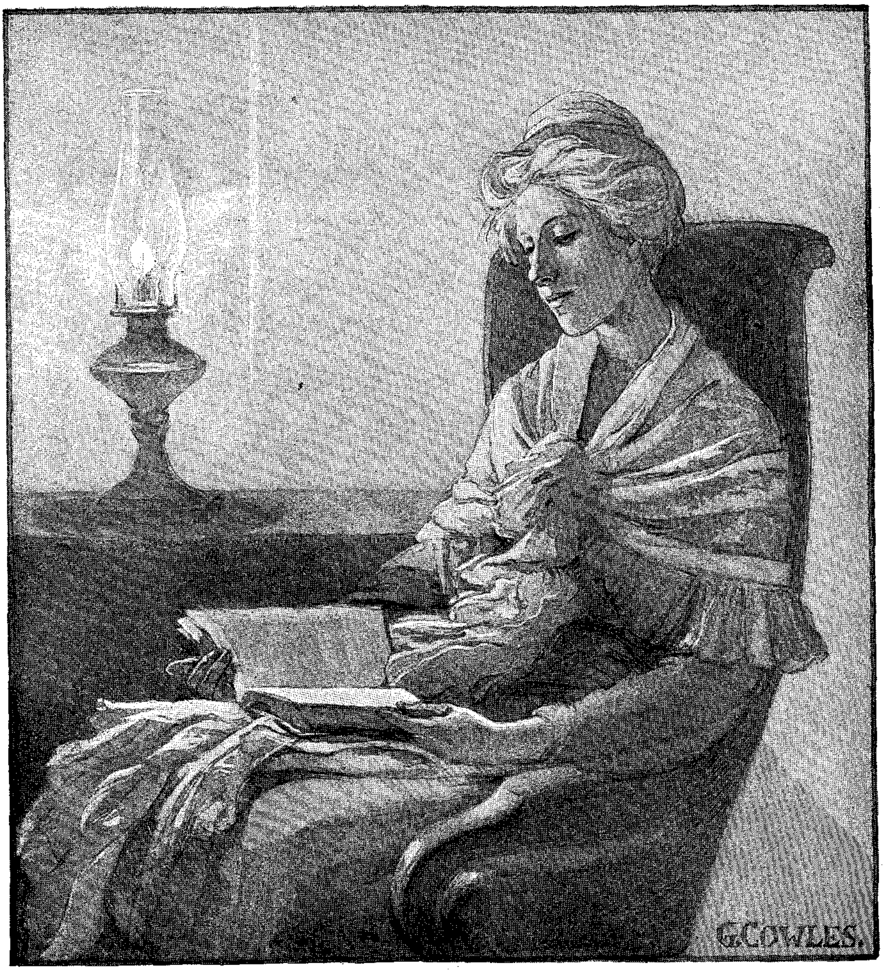
Then she found herself listening to the horse's hoofs, beating along with her tumultuous thought.

At the parson's gate Myra stood trembling while the horse was blanketed, and when Ansel took her hand she shrank a little.

"Ansel," she breathed, "let's go back."

"You're cold, dear," he answered tenderly. "Don't you tremble so."

Then suddenly, again like a dream, they were in the minister's sitting-room, where the fire flickered behind great iron dogs, and



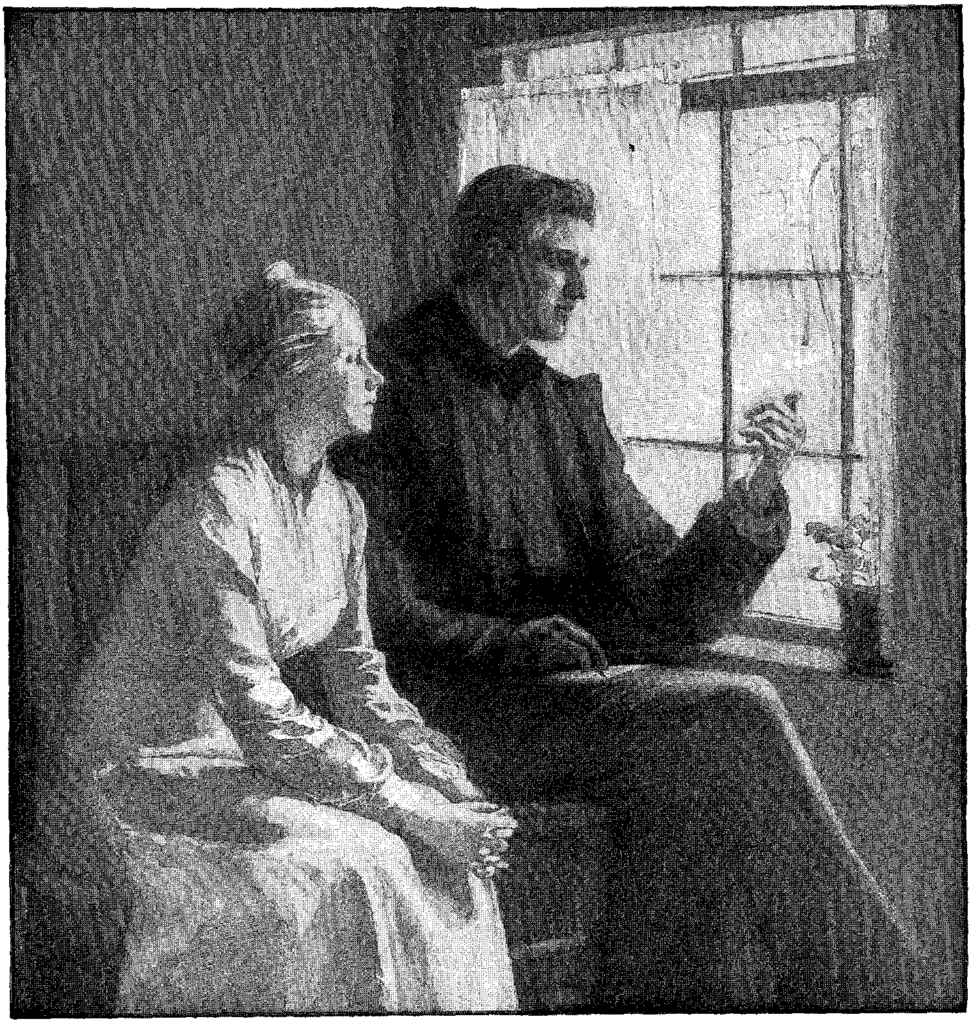
"She sat there in her dream"

Myra had taken her jacket off and was putting her hands to the blaze. She had resolved on the way to beseech Parson True to tell her all about this custom of marrying for a time, and undoing the habit of it when necessity should serve. But though she began with a trembling word, nobody seemed to notice her, save to be doing little cherishing things for her in an observant way, and she hardly knew how to speak.

"We're in a good deal of a hurry," said Ansel, cutting short her frightened questioning, and then, still in a dream, she was trembling beside him, her hand in his, and Parson True's grave daughter was standing in the background looking at them in that comprehending way of hers, as if she understood the love she did not share, and Parson True was saying the words. There was cake and wine, and the parson blessed her in old-fashioned phrases, and she and Ansel were in the wagon again, whirling off toward home. Again there was silence between them, and even walking up the path with her Ansel did not speak. But at the door he kissed her.

"Don't you cry, dear," he said. "I don't want you should ever cry. I sha'n't come near till old Betsy's cleaned the house. Then I'll come. It'll be a day or two. You be ready." He strode back along the path, and Myra, waiting, heard his wheels upon the road and along the driveway to his house. She watched until she saw the lantern moving about while he unharnessed. Then she went in and, taking off her things, sat down by the dying fire. It was a dream still, beautiful but terrifying, and under it all was the sense of her own wrong-doing. She saw herself through her mother's eyes, and her mind went back to the day when she had been guilty before, and all her golden hair lay scattered at her feet. But some infection rested on her from the man's robustness and, with a daring recognition of life within her, she said aloud: "My hair grew again." Then she rose and, with a thought of omen in a dying fire, piled on wood and blew until it answered her.

Next morning she awoke with a throbbing consciousness of some new world about her, and all that day she hurried about the house, setting it in order and making her clothing into orderly piles, lest he should summon her away. She found herself referring the smallest questions to him, as if, in some quick transference of loyalty, she had merely bent her nature to new bonds. As she worked, the night before was vague and troubled to her, and still the sense of her wrong-doing grew and grew. If it had not been for the smoke from Ansel's chimney, she could have dismissed it all as some unproved imagining.



"We'll move the pinies, so't you can see 'em from the kitchen winder'"

At the end of the second afternoon she sat by the fire, idle. The latch lifted, in neighborly fashion, and Ansel walked in.

"She's gone," he said, warming his hands at the blaze.

"Who?"

"Old Betsy. The house is clean, all but the attic, an' we'll leave that till spring. Come, dear, get your things."

"What for?" Myra managed to ask, trembling.

"Ain't you comin' home to get my supper? I'll cover up the fire." Then he laughed a little. "You've got to mind me now," he said, with a catch in his voice not quite like laughter. "You promised."

Myra brought out a shawl, a Rob Roy plaid she had worn skating when they were children, and put it over her head. Ansel had been covering the fire, and now he took her hand and led her down the path and along the road to his house, where all the curtains were hospitably up and lamps were lighted. He opened the door.

"You go in," he said, and Myra, in a trance of obedience, stepped across her sill into the great kitchen where the fire blazed and the table was set for two. She hung her shawl on a nail where Ansel's mother had used to hang hers.

"You want me to get supper?" she asked simply.

Ansel put his arms about her and held her to him.

"I'll be good to you," he promised her. "I'll be good to you."

"But it's only for this winter," said Myra wistfully, and he answered:

"No, it's only for this winter."

The strangest part of it all was its familiarity. In a week Myra went singing about her house, and it seemed to her that she had always sung and always lived with somebody who treated her like a beloved child and was pleased with all she did. She tried new dishes out of old Mrs. Forbes's cookery book, and Ansel drove five miles to buy citron, with the unquestioning devotion of other lovers in riding for a flower. She wore her blue cashmere every afternoon now. Ansel had recommended it, in his unregarding way, and she had trembled out something about "mother" and the desirability of having it "for nice" another year. But that afternoon they drove to the "street" and, Ansel standing by, she picked out a red cashmere and a sweet delaine with forget-me-nots sown over it, and after they were made she felt less guilty about the blue. Yet none of their pastimes made her neglect the work her mother had laid out for her. She tacked the spread, and even quilted one pieced long ago and left in the attic for a leisure time; and Ansel sat by the quilting frame, rolling up the finished work, telling her stories, picking up her thimble for her, and bridging silences with laughter. They planned things, while they sat together, house-bound in winter days, always what they should do to make the place more gay and livable. It was Ansel who first touched upon the garden. He had always been, as his mother said, a great hand for flowers, and one day Myra found him by the window busy with pencil and paper.

"What are you doin'?" she asked.

"Plannin' out the garden beds," said Ansel absorbedly. "We'll move the pinies, so't you can see 'em from the kitchen winder when you're moldin' bread. The hollyhocks, too. I never did like 'em out there in the open where they'll thrash and bang in a gale o' wind. We'll put 'em down by the orchard wall."

Myra leaned her head against his shoulder and thought how wonderful it was to live in a country where a great benevolent creature like this made all things bright. Suddenly she sat up and looked at him in swift remembrance.

"Ansel!" she cried, "that'll be in the spring."

"Yes, so 'twill."

"Well, in the spring, mother'll come home. I sha'n't be here."

Ansel laid down the pencil and folded the paper.

"No," said he in a sad abstractedness. "So you won't."

The tears brimmed her eyes and, seeing them, he took up the pencil again. "Well," said he briskly, "we might as well do our plannin', if it ain't goin' to come to pass. Them columbines now—" and the fairy tale went on.

The sun rose higher and brought a smiling March. There was a sound of moving water and the earth smelled good. One day Ansel was fencing, and Myra ran to him from the kitchen, when she had a word to say, her bright hair blowing in the wind.

"Say," he called after her, as she sped back after one such trip, "d'you see that letter I laid on the end o' the mantelpiece? I took it out o' the office when I got the horse shod, an' forgot to say so."

Myra nodded, and her pace sagged to a leaden walk. Foreboding was at her heart and she held the letter for a moment before tearing it open. It said exactly what she knew it would. She dropped it and went wavering to the door.

"Ansel!" she called weakly; "Ansel!"

He threw down his axe and came. Myra was sitting stolidly by the hearth, her great eyes dark with trouble.

"She's comin' home," she announced, without looking at him.

"Your mother?"

"Yes. She's comin' home."

"Lucy Ann with her?"

"She don't say."

There was a pause, while Ansel gravely looked at her. Suddenly Myra lifted her eyes to his and cried out harshly:

"You know what it means, Ansel? I've got to go over there. I've got to!"

Ansel put his hand gently on her hair.

"There, honey," said he, "don't you fret."

"We made the bargain, didn't we, Ansel? We said we'd have three months together, an' then 'twould be all over."

"We certain did. Now, don't you think about it. I'll go over an' open the winders an' start the fire."

If the first weeks of her marriage had been a dream of pleasure, this was a dream of pain. That day and the next Ansel was ever at her side. He helped her set her mother's house in order and carried over the food she had cooked for the home-coming supper. Myra worked with tears streaming down her cheeks, and always in sad silence. Her face had fallen into haggardness in those few hours. Her eyes looked from it woefully. On the afternoon of the second day her mother's house was warm and welcoming, and Myra, at her own window, stood with Ansel, waiting for the stage. When they should see it dip into the hollow beyond the barn it would be time enough to go.

"Ansel," she said, clinging to him; "I've tied up my clothes in a sheet. All but the dresses. Them I could hang over my arm. I don't want to jam my cashmeres, even if I never should wear 'em any more."

"You leave 'em here a spell," said Ansel softly, his cheek down on her hair. "They'll be a kind of a comfort to me till I get used to it. I'll bring 'em over 'twixt daylight an' dark, some night soon, an' leave 'em. I needn't stop to speak to anybody."

"Ansel, what you goin' to do left here alone? You goin' back to Boston?"

"I don't know's I rightly know yet," said Ansel gravely. "There! there's the stage!" He seemed to be hurrying her out at the door, and that last touch of his hands was more than she could bear.

"Oh, my soul!" she cried, "my soul!" stumbling along the road to her task. "Oh, I never can bear it in this world! I never can."

But when Mrs. Bourne and Lucy Ann, stiff but walking steadily, came in at the front door, Myra was there to meet them, a little flushed and trembling, though not quite in her old way, and no one saw the change in her. Lucy Ann was like her mother, strong-willed and resolute, though of a robust good-humor.

"Ain't you done your hair different?" she asked, when Mrs. Bourne had bestowed a sparse kiss on Myra, and it was her turn for greeting.

Myra put her hand dreamily to her head.

"I guess I have," said she. She seemed to herself so truly another creature that a change of fashion was less than nothing to her. In the hour before supper, she fell stolidly into her accustomed ways, stepping in and out from pantry to kitchen as if no other house had ever earned her love. Mrs. Bourne and Lucy Ann were busy unpacking the top layers of their trunks, to leave the balance of the work till morning, and at six Myra summoned them.

"Come," she called. Her voice rang sharply, and they came, vaguely alarmed by it.

The table was beautiful in the nicety of its array, and the fragrance of tea filled the air beguilingly. Mrs. Bourne assumed her place, and Lucy Ann, following Myra's motion to her, took the seat opposite. Myra was about to slip into the one between them, but midway she paused, straightened herself, and stood with her hand upon the chair.

"Mother!" she cried chokingly.

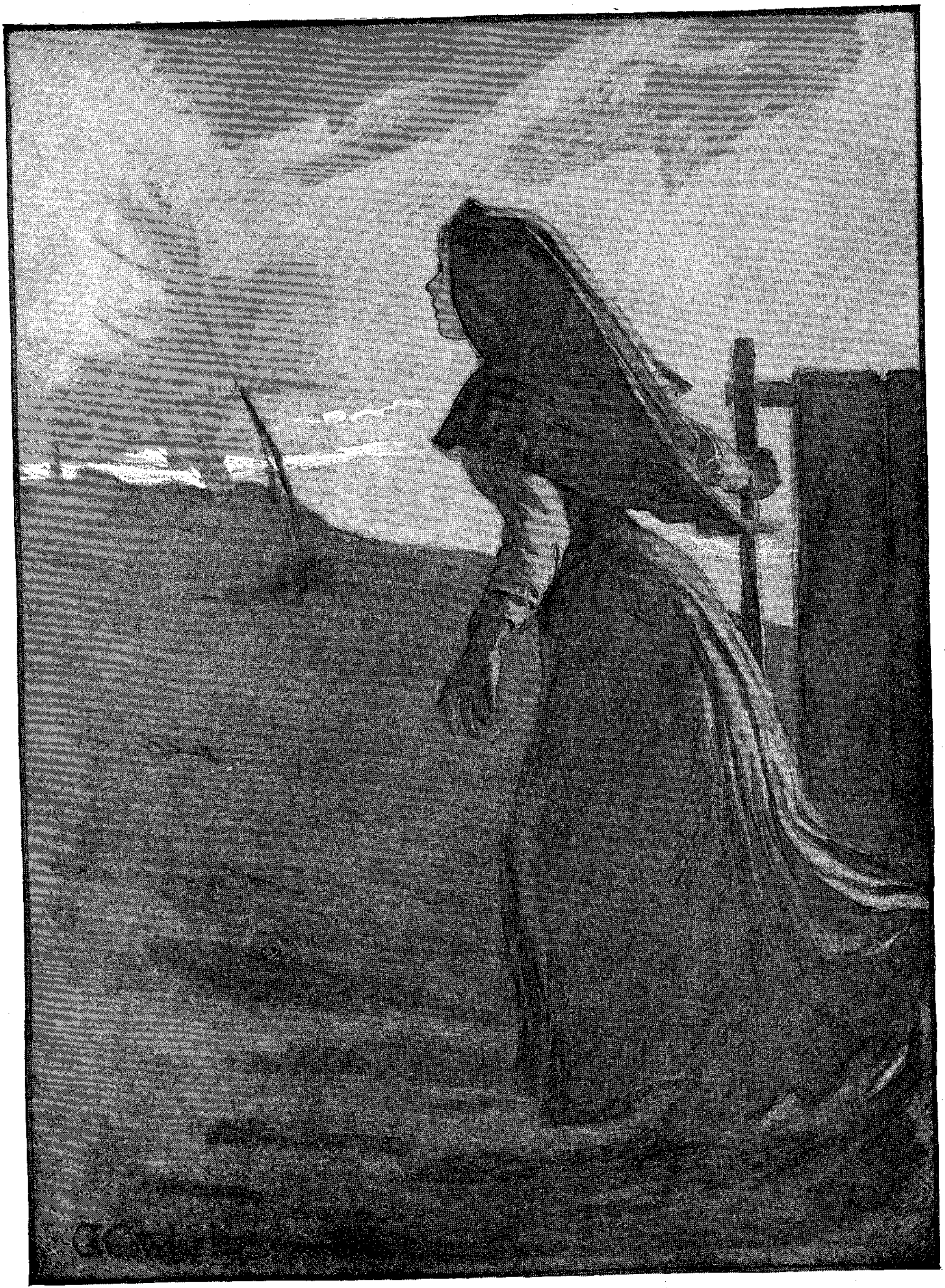
"The land!" ejaculated Mrs. Bourne, setting the teapot down in haste. "I 'most scalded me. Myra, what's the matter?"

"Mother, I've got to tell you something."

"Then for the land sake, out with it!" retorted Mrs. Bourne, alarm upon her face. "What have you been up to? You ain't burnt the house down. You lost the bank book? Myra, you'd ought to be trounced, standin' there like a bump on a log. You speak up an' tell."

Myra spoke, and her voice sounded to her hollow and of no avail.

"I've got married. I've married Ansel Forbes."



"the west showed a ray of yellow light"

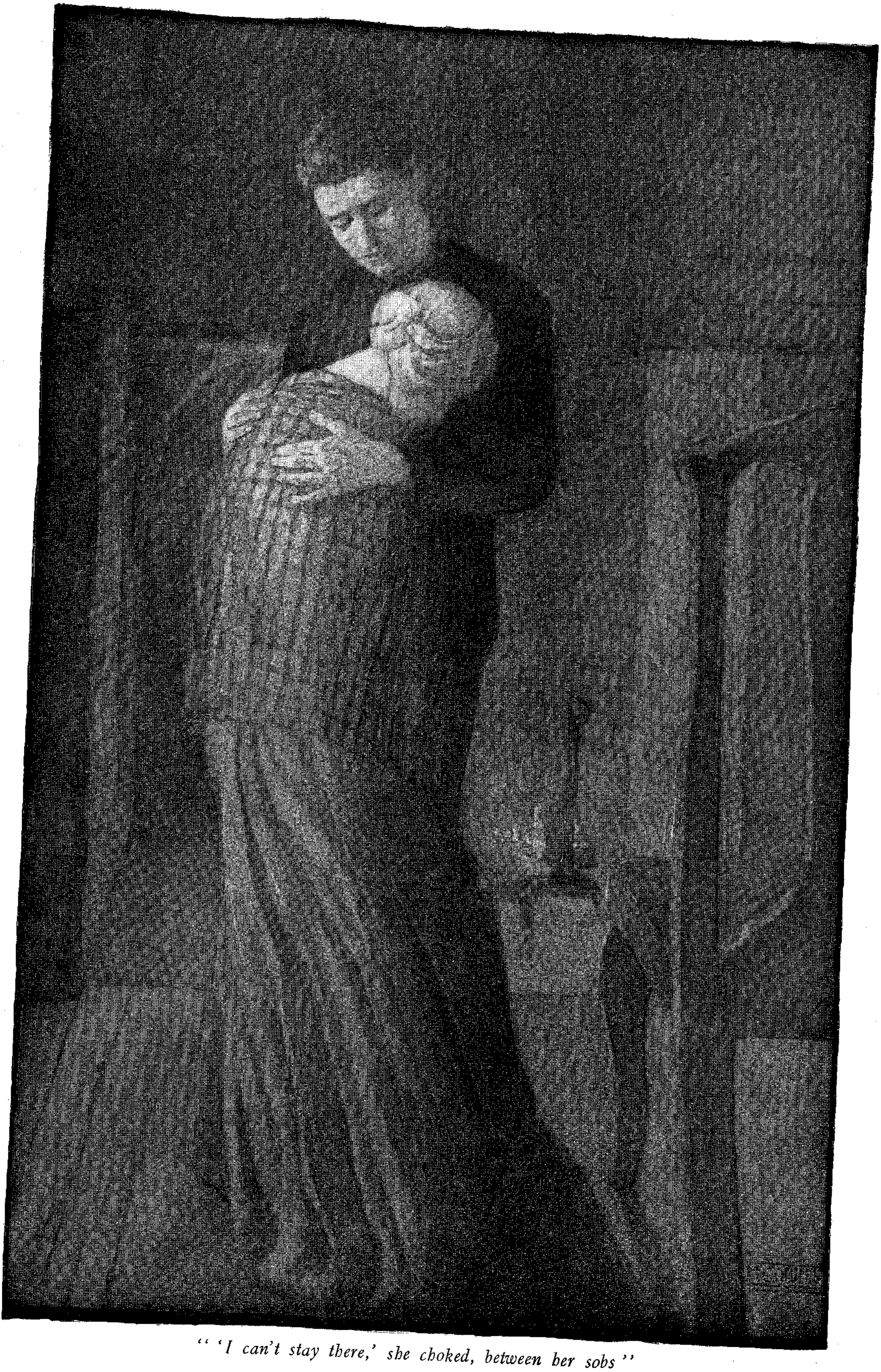
Mrs. Bourne sat wide-eyed and open-mouthed.

"Married Ansel Forbes?" she echoed.

"Yes, mother, I have. An' I ain't sorry. An' don't you try to make me sorry, for I sha'n't be."

"Well," said Mrs. Bourne irrelevantly; "you set down an' eat your supper."

It was exactly what Myra had meant to do, now that her news had been told, but her voice went on in spite of her. A spark had sprung to either eye. Her cheeks burned hotly.



" 'I can't stay there,' she choked, between her sobs "

"I've got to get his supper," she said sharply. "I must go now. I must go home."

She had reached the door before the two women recovered themselves to any understanding.

"Wait a minute," called Lucy Ann. She rose stiffly and walked after her, moved by a sense of the joylessness of such leave-taking. She put a detaining hand upon her sister's arm.

"There, Myra," said she kindly; "like as not you've done real well. They say Ansel's been left something by his aunt up there in Boston, an' the express business an' all. Mother, you speak up, won't you?"

Mrs. Bourne opened her mouth but no words came. Myra had been pinning the little Rob Roy shawl over her head and now she unlatched the door.

"Good-by, mother," she said huskily. "I'll be over after supper."

At the gate she heard her mother calling her.

"Myra!" came the voice, in the old, quick tones. "Myra!"

A sob caught Myra in her throat, and she stood trembling. She did not answer; she only turned her face away and set her feet toward Ansel's. And the voice absolved her.

"You tell Ansel to come over with ye!"

Myra threw open the gate and ran along the road. There were frogs peeping in the distance, and the west showed a ray of yellow light. She sped up the driveway and her heart failed her because the house was dark. She opened the door and hurried forward into the kitchen.

"Ansel!" she cried passionately. "Oh, Ansel, you here?"

A fire was flickering on the hearth and Ansel rose slowly as she came to him. It was incredible to find him there, solid and warm and hers. She hid her face upon his arm.

"I can't stay there," she choked, between her sobs. "This is my home. I've got to live in it. Ansel, you had your supper?"

"No," said Ansel, stroking her hair.

"Wa'n't you goin' to have any?"

"When you come an' got it for me."

"What made you think I'd come?"

He laughed softly at her foolishness and, as she stood there quieting into peace, new wisdom broke upon her.

"Maybe you thought 'twould be this way, when you told me I could go back?" she said.

"Maybe I did."

"Maybe Parson True thought so, too?"

"Maybe so, honey. Now, let's have our supper."

A WEST POINT REGULATION

BY

MARY RAYMOND SHIPMAN ANDREWS

AUTHOR OF "TWO SIDES OF A STREET," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY KARL ANDERSON

SCENE—*Drawing-room in house of West Point officer. Open fire, tea-table set, kettle on.*

Time—Present.

Curtain rises disclosing Margery Harrison standing, back to audience, at door, center stage down.

MARGERY: Oh yes! Do!

VOICE OUTSIDE: Can't. Wish I could.

MARGERY: It's perfectly safe. Just long enough for a cup of tea. Never mind regulations this once. Come in!

Enter Cadet Richard Harrison in uniform. Stands in doorway.

DICK: See here, Margery, you'll get me into a hole. I really *can't* come in. [*Comes in.*] You know as well as I there's a regulation against our being in officers' quarters except Wednesdays and Saturdays. And to-day is a sloppy Thursday.

MARGERY: Such a regulation! As if you great cadets were babies! Anyway, it's safe. I haven't a host or hostess to my name. Search me. Captain Martin is at cavalry drill and Mrs. Martin doesn't get in from New York till six. So there's only Toodles, the dog. Are you afraid of Toodles?

DICK [*throwing down cap*]: Oh, very well then! If that's your nasty temper! You women always are dragging poor innocent men into mischief. Wasn't it St. Anthony that tempted the devil and found he wasn't in it, compared to the women? What was that stunt? [*Pulls off his army overcoat.*] That doesn't sound just straight.

MARGERY: Dick, don't try to talk religion—you don't know how. [*Goes across to tea-table, lifts kettle, scratches match, and lights lamp under kettle.*] See! Aren't you glad you came to this party? Here's tea all ready. Isn't it cozy though? Now, what harm can this do the United States army, I'd like to know? Just two old cousins drinking tea!

DICK: It's not the army I'm worrying about. [*Shakes head solemnly.*] It's little Dicky Harrison, bless his innocent heart. [*Springs suddenly to his feet.*] Margery! Was that a step outside? Suppose an officer should call on you! He'd have to report me. [*Both listen breathlessly a moment.*]

MARGERY: Here, Dick, wheel this corner of the piano out a bit—there! [*Dick moves upright piano, which stands across a corner, about eighteen inches from wall.*] Now! You can jump behind there at a second's notice. What a goose I am! I'll just tell Eliza to excuse me if any one comes and then we're perfectly safe. [*Takes step towards door, then glances back at tea-table.*] The kettle's boiling—I'll make the tea first. [*Goes to table, sits down on arm of chair near it, puts tea from caddy into tea-pot, and pours a little water over it.*]

DICK: That's not enough. I'll drink twice that. I call that skimpy.

MARGERY: You're an uneducated person. Don't you know how to make tea? You ought *never* to fill it up right away. You just cover it with enough water to draw the strength.

DICK: Oh! I see. To draw the strength.

MARGERY: And then, in about three minutes, you fill it up. No—oh, no [*as Dick seizes tea-kettle*]; it isn't time yet. Wait till I tell you. [*He takes two or three small cakes.*] Oh, Dick, don't eat *all* the cakes till you get your tea! [*Bites one herself.*] Good, aren't they?

DICK: Margery, you're a twiner—you bet you are. You're as sweet as—as sweet as cakes, when you fuss over things that way. Girls are the devil, aren't they? They make you sort of—sort of weak in the lungs. [*Margery, who is putting sugar into a cup, stops and looks at him scornfully.*] Tell me, Margery, do you think it's any harm for cousins to marry each other?

MARGERY [*cheerfully*]: Not if they want to!

DICK [*leaning over her*]: Margery! I'm awfully fond of you, you know. Do you think—don't you think—wouldn't you like to marry me?

MARGERY: As a favor to me, is it? Oh, Dick! Oh, *Dick!* What a way to propose! [*Suddenly springs up.*] Oh, my goodness! We forgot the tea! Fill it up, Dick! [*Excitedly.*] Hurry and fill it up or it won't be good. [*Dick sullenly lifts kettle and pours water into tea-pot.*] There, now, in a minute it's cooked. Are you hungry?

DICK [*waving the tea-kettle*]: But, Margery, you haven't answered——

MARGERY [*snatching lump of sugar and backing off*]: Sweets to the sweet! See if you can catch that—here, Fido! [*Throws it at him.*]

DICK [*with dignity*]: I understand. You won't be serious because——

MARGERY: *Please* put down that kettle, Dick. It's hot. I'm afraid of it. Because we are such good friends, Dick, and have such fine times together. Because being serious would spoil it all. Don't push me to the wall, Dick, there's a lamb. See, the tea's ready. Two lumps—*three?* Greedy brute! You West Point boys are always hungry. Lemon—yes. There— [*Hands him cup of tea. Dick has walked up and down room gloomily, hands in pockets, during latter part of this speech. At this point he stops, pulls himself together, and takes cup.*]

DICK: All right, Margery. Guess you're right. Lots of time to be serious. Young woman, you haven't yet told that maid to excuse you. Suppose one of the Tacks walks in on this convivial scene—where am I? Answer me that. In hotter water than this [*gulps tea*] awful stuff. I should be busted, you know.

MARGERY: Busted? [*Puzzled. Puts sugar in a cup.*]

DICK: Reduced to the ranks, you know.

I'm a cadet officer. And about five demerits, including confinements.

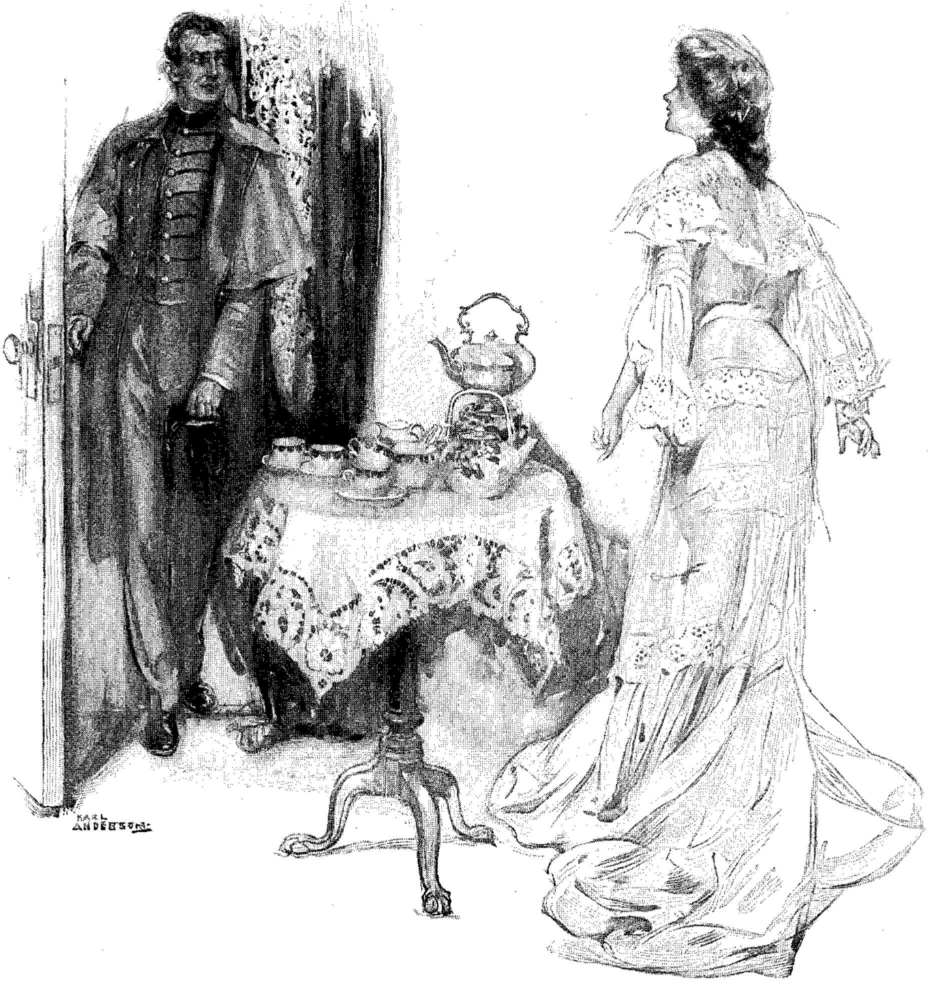
MARGERY: Huh? [*Wrinkles forehead and holds tongs in air.*]

DICK: Yes, sir. Think of that, you butterfly of pleasure. Hustle off and tell the maid—quick.

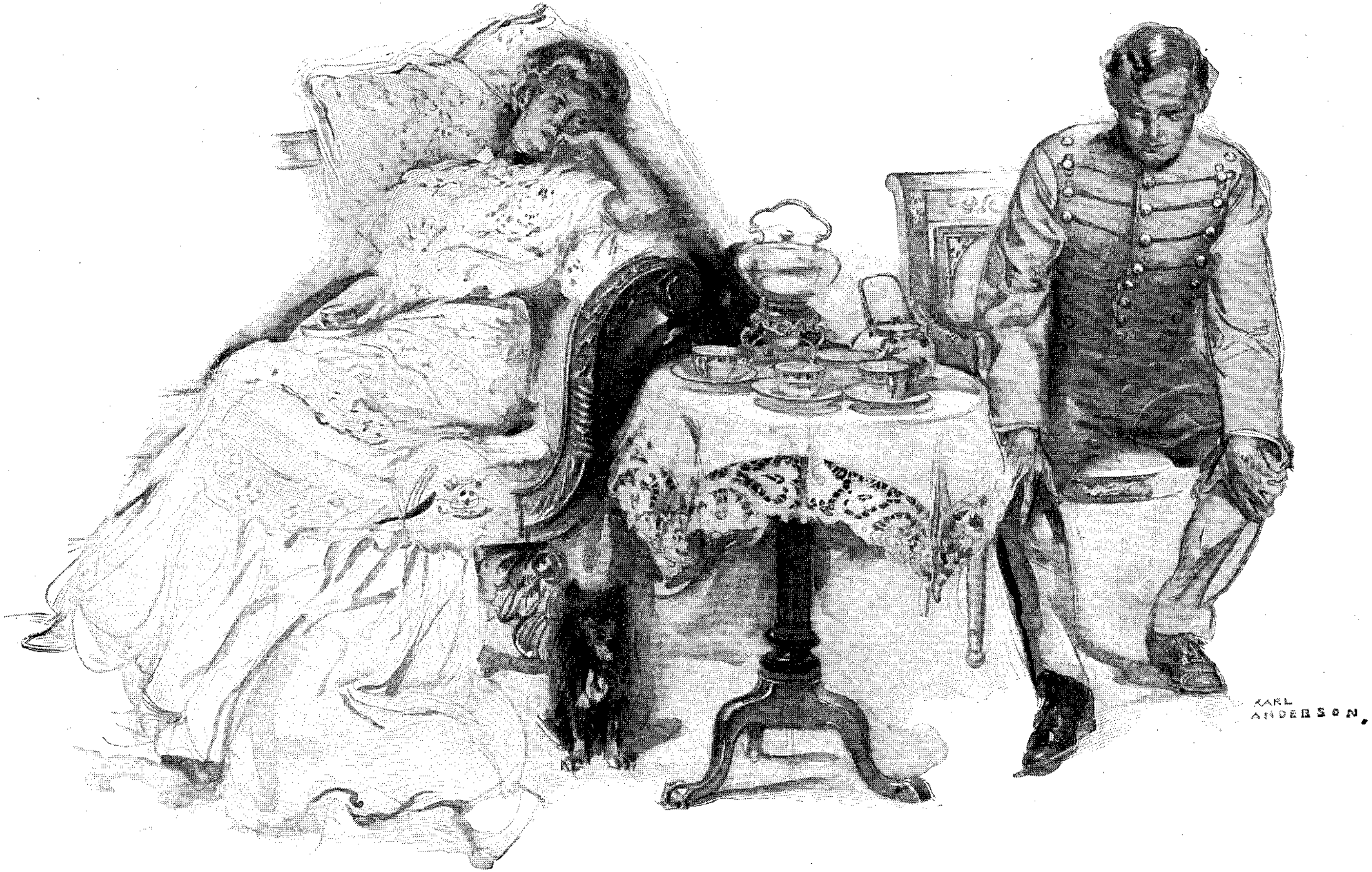
MARGERY: You're a cold-hearted fish. Here I am, tired and tealess, and a cup to cheer me but not inebriate me all temptingly ready, and you say "Hustle off." You've got yours; let me have just a bite of tea before I go hunting Elizas and things.

DICK: No hurry. Imbibe! [*Drops into a chair and stares at fire.*] Cold-hearted! Wish I were! I've too much heart; that's my trouble. [*Shakes head sorrowfully.*] I feel too much. I'd like to be callous like some of these chaps. There's old Masters, for instance [*Margery looks up and stops drinking tea*]; they call him "The Stony Charmer," because he's so impervious. He doesn't care a whoop for the best girl on the top side of the earth. Why, that darned fellow prides himself, they say, on the fact that he has never been in love. Think of that! And here I am, and about twenty girls this year—[*Stops suddenly and looks at Margery in alarm*]—I don't mean—you know there hasn't been one in the same class with you, Margery. It's entirely different. It is for a fact.

MARGERY [*abstractedly*]: Oh, that's all right. [*With more interest*] Do you mean Lieutenant Masters, Dick? Does he pride himself on never having been in love?



"*See here, Margery, you'll get me into a hole. I really can't come in*"


KARL ANDERSON

"I've too much heart; that's my trouble"

DICK: That's the tale. One night at a mess dinner they say he announced that sentiment took too much time, and he'd had measles, but had never been in love and never meant to be. And they guyed him for a Stony Charmer, and the name stuck.

MARGERY: Oh! The name stuck. I see. He has never been in love, and nobody —I suppose—has ever cared for him. How queer!

DICK: It is queer, isn't it? He's a good-looker and has a good heart, though he's a Tack, which is agin him. Popular with the cadets. But it would be a joy to the whole corps if we could catch the Stony Charmer in a melting condition. Couldn't you trap him into falling in love with you, Margery? He ought to be easy fruit. Nothing on your side, of course—just lead him on and tell me about it, and I'll see that it gets around. Try it, there's a good girl.

MARGERY: Nice program for me! What is a "Tack," Dick?

DICK: Why, a tactical officer, you know. There are six of them. They're in charge of the cadets, turn about.

MARGERY: Oh! Sort of nurses.

DICK [*with a whoop*]: That's a good one! They'll have to hear that. That name ought to be a sticker, too. But, Margery, put your mind on my suggestion. Don't be afraid. You're really a very fascinating girl, you know—even I—as you know—I—[*hesitates, embarrassed*]—well, anyway, old Masters might easily take a shine to you, if you fished him carefully. Do now, there's a lady. And then tell me all the details and I'll select the best for publication, and——

MARGERY [*indignantly*]: Dick, are you crazy?

DICK: Not a bit. Don't fuss yourself. I'm just enthusiastic. I'd almost be willing to be found to get a good one like that on old Masters.

MARGERY: Found! Are you lost?

DICK: You don't know a blessed thing, do you? Found deficient, you see—turned down—kicked out. But that's an aside. I'm getting keener and keener about our plan.

MARGERY [*scornfully*]: *Our* plan, indeed!

DICK: Margery—pargery, you're preordained as an instrument to deliver old Masters—which we call him old because he's the youngest officer—into the hands of the righteous. I tell you how you'll do it. First, you win his heart—which you can do at a walk—and then you make a date with him some day here, and provision the corner behind the piano, and I'll lurk there in ambush with paper and pencil. Then you lure him on till he gets impassioned and uses burning language and all that sort, and I'll take notes. And there you are! [*Triumphantly.*]

MARGERY: Dick, you actually talk as if you meant it!

DICK: Mean it? By the shades of P. T. Barnum, I mean it. Of course, I mean it. Won't you do it?

MARGERY: Do it! You're insulting me. When I've taken to stealing spoons for a livelihood—when I'm a sneak-thief by profession, then perhaps I'll do it. Until then will you kindly— [*Suddenly stops short, holds up hand, and listens intently.*] Dick! [*He jumps to his feet.*] Some one in the hall! [*Stage whisper.*] Behind the piano—quick! I didn't hear the bell—I never told Eliza—it's a man's voice—an officer—be quick! [*Dick darts behind piano, then darts back and snatches his overcoat and cap and drags them with him, just as curtain at doorway parts. A corner of the overcoat shows outside piano.*]

Enter Lieutenant Masters in uniform.

MASTERS: How do you do, Miss Margery? [*Shakes hands.*] Were you talking to yourself? [*Looks around.*] I thought I heard voices.

MARGERY [*excitedly*]: Did you never hear whom people talk to when they talk to themselves? I hate to have you think I'm friendly with that person.

MASTERS: I won't think it. Nothing can make me think it. It's more likely you were talking to angels. Still more likely cadets, who are neither angels nor devils.

MARGERY [*embarrassed*]: Cadets! How absurd! It isn't their day out, is it? [*Sits down. Masters stands a moment longer and talks to her.*]

MASTERS: All the same, I suspect you had one of the young sinners here. I'm glad he escaped—but don't tell that against me. I hate to report them. They're a well-meaning lot of cubs. All the same, I should have had to report him if I had caught him.

MARGERY: Are you going to have some tea? [*Pours a cup.*] What a glorious imagination. Must be such a pleasure to make up stories for yourself like that. You've arranged a whole tragedy out of the fact that I was talking out loud when you came. I didn't hear the bell ring—did you break in the front door? How quiet you were!

MASTERS: Oh, I merely jumped through the glass—didn't you hear it crash? Shows how interested you were in what you were saying to yourself. Very suspicious. [*Shakes head.*] But never mind that now. Miss Margery, I'm unexpectedly going away from the post to-morrow.

MARGERY [*visibly disturbed*]: Oh! Are you?

MASTERS: I came to-night because there is something I want to say before I go. Do you know what it is? Can you think what it is, Margery?

MARGERY [*glancing toward piano and speaking hurriedly and nervously*]: No, I don't. No, I can't. But don't say it! Oh, please don't say it!

MASTERS [*looking reproachful*]: Do you mean that? Last night you let me hold your hand. [*Snort from behind piano. Masters stops, startled.*] What was that?

MARGERY [*nervous and embarrassed*]: The —oh, the—the dog.

MASTERS: Oh, the dog. [*Resumes.*] You know, you must have known then that I loved you. [*Smothered cough from Dick.*] What *is* that sound?

MARGERY: Oh, I *think* the dog must have a cold. I think he must be—must be—somewhere. [*Looks about vaguely; then vindictively.*] I wish I could kill him!

MASTERS [*smiling*]: What a terrible temper! Never mind the dog—I'll kick him later, if you like. Now, listen to me, Margery. [*Takes her hand.*] You'll let me hold it again, dear?

MARGERY [*pulling hand away*]: Mr. Masters, I'd really—really—[*nervously and earnestly*]—rather you—you shouldn't—you shouldn't talk this way—now.

MASTERS: Now? [*Looks bewildered.*] You don't mean that I may never—that you will not sometime—that we must always—Oh, not forever! [*Sound like smothered chuckle from behind piano. Both start violently.*]

MARGERY [*rising, wild with nervousness*]: Mr. Masters, you *must* not—you shall not—I *can't* let you— Oh, *please* go home!

MASTERS: Where is that——: excuse me. [*Begins pulling at window curtains.*] I'll have him out of here or know the reason why. [*Goes from one window to another. Looks under chairs and sofa.*]

MARGERY: Oh, never mind—never mind! Sit down—only sit *down!* It's—it's a harmless beast. *I* don't mind. You—you will get used to it. Only *do* sit down. [*Makes effort to change conversation.*] What a—what a bright night it is out, isn't it?

MASTERS [*sticking hands in pockets and staring at fire*]: It's raining torrents.

MARGERY: Is it? [*Astonished.*] Oh, yes, so it is. I'd forgotten. It's so long since I've been out. [*Masters moves and looks around as if for a dog. Margery puts hand on his arm anxiously.*] Oh, *do* sit down!

MASTERS [*catching her hand*]: Margery! Tell me you didn't mean that cruel thing!

MARGERY [*dazed*]: What cruel thing? To sit down?

MASTERS: No—no. That I must go home. Did you mean that?

MARGERY [*softly*]: No, I didn't. [*Suddenly remembers.*] Yes—oh, yes, I did! You'd better, I really think you'd better.

MASTERS: Margery, last night, I believed, hoped that you cared a little for me. Does this mean that I was all wrong—that you do not—will not love me? Is that what you are trying to show me by acting in this strange way? If that is it, it would be kinder to be honest, to tell me frankly that you do not care as I hoped, and then I will go—for always.

MARGERY [*in agony*]: Oh, no, no!

MASTERS: No—what? I can't understand you, Margery. I never saw you like this before. Do you mean that you don't love me, or do you mean—I hope so with all my soul, Margery—that you don't want me to go. Which is it, dear? Shall I stay, Margery dear? [*Sudden explosion of sounds from piano, sneezing and laughing combined. Margery and Masters fall apart and stare, petrified, at piano. Masters goes on grimly.*] That's the most remarkable dog I have ever heard. [*Takes stride or two across room and picks up end of Dick's overcoat that has caught outside piano. Looks silently at Margery, then pulls it.*] Does your dog wear that? [*He pushes piano, which rolls out, and Dick stands discovered. He draws his feet together sharply, salutes Masters, and stands at attention.*]

DICK: Beg pardon, Lieutenant.

MASTERS [*after a moment's silence*]: You may go, Mr Harrison. I shall report you.

DICK: Yes, sir. Good evening, sir. Good evening, Margery—dear. [*He picks up coat and cap. Masters glares at him as he leaves the room. In a moment the street door slams. Masters turns to Margery.*]

MASTERS: You knew he was there?

MARGERY: Yes—but— [*Takes step toward him—he turns from her.*] Oh, *please*, let me explain!

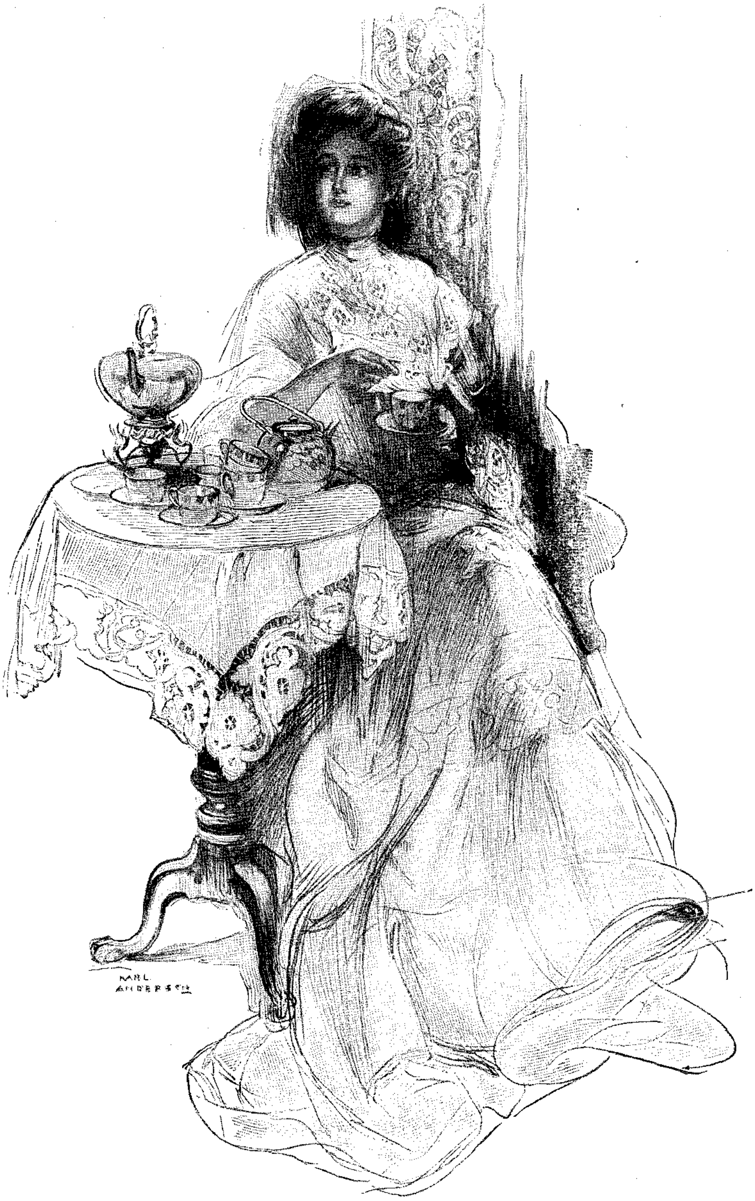
MASTERS: It is not worth while. Don't trouble yourself. It could make no difference. You had it planned, I suppose. It was very successful. A good joke. I bid you good evening, Miss Harrison. [*Turns to go.*]

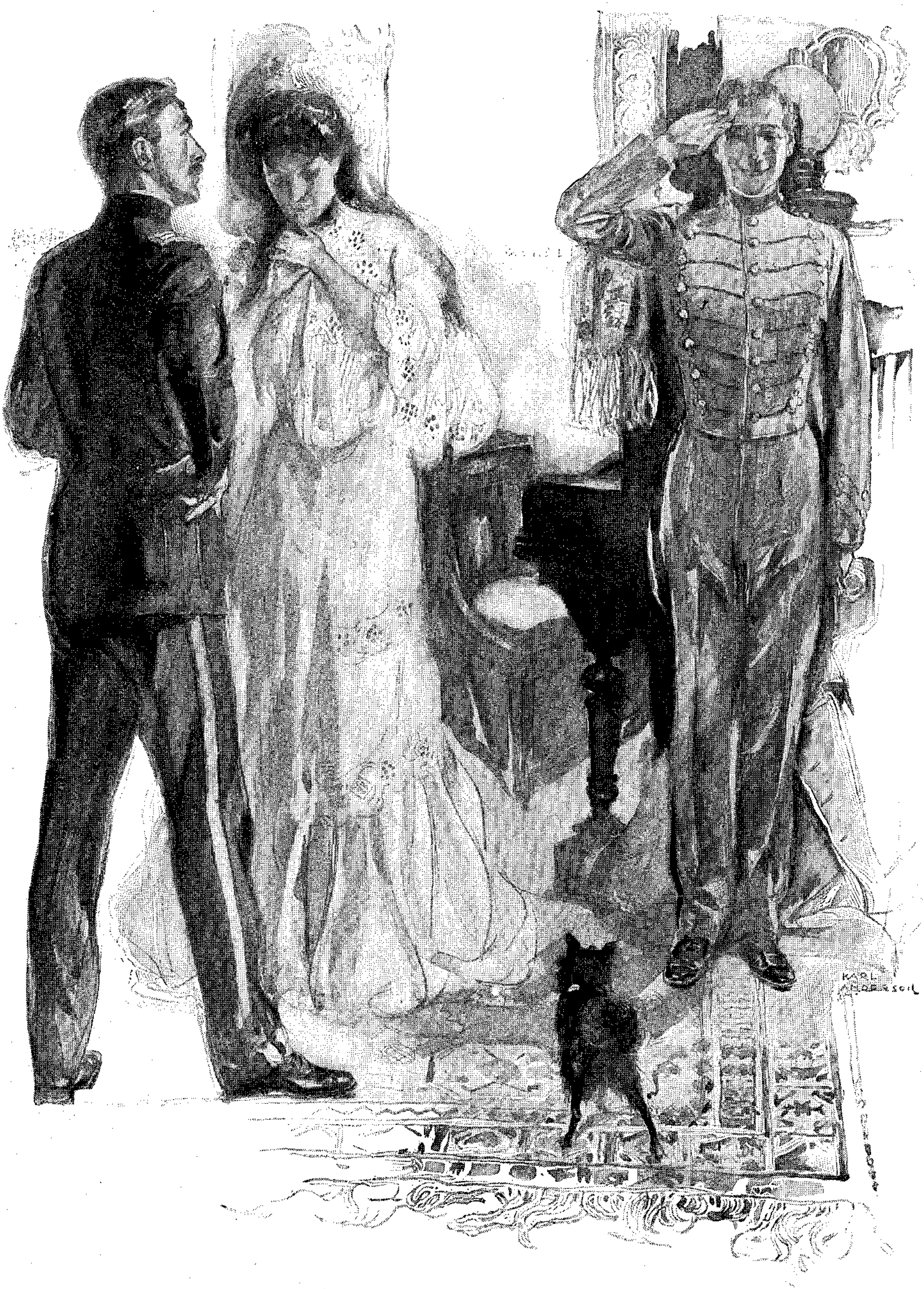
MARGERY [*again stepping forward and clasping hands in agonized entreaty*]: Oh, please, *please* don't go that way! Please let me tell you. Don't you see I couldn't help it? I—I— [*Stammers and hesitates in excitement.*]

MASTERS [*speaking half over his shoulder, without looking at her*]: I do *not* see. I altogether fail to see *why* you couldn't have helped it.

MARGERY [*becoming righteously indignant*]: Oh! Very well, then! Perhaps, as

"Does he pride himself on never having been in love?"





"Beg pardon, Lieutenant"

you say, it is not worth while. Perhaps *I* am not worth while. [*Voice trembles a little, but she is very haughty.*]

MASTERS [*turning around and going toward her with hands stretched out*]: Oh, Margery, Margery! How could you! How could you have turned the best, the all, I have to give, into a joke? How could you have made me the laughing-stock of the whole outfit of scoffing boys? Margery—explain it—tell me you *didn't* know he was there—tell me!

MARGERY [*standing stiff and insulted, face turned away from him*]: I'm afraid you wouldn't find it worth while! [*At this instant the front door bangs hard, the portiere is* *slung aside, and Dick rushes in like a whirlwind. Stops short and stares at them in consternation.*]

DICK: I say, you two! [*Then to himself*] By jingo! They're fighting. That's just what I thought. That's why I came back.

MARGERY [*with a snap*]: You'd better have stayed away. You've made enough trouble already.

DICK: Well, if that isn't ingratitude for you!

MARGERY: Huh!

DICK: I've come back here to be your guardian angel and you treat me like a dog! [*Suddenly explodes into shrieks of laughter.*] I forgot! I *am* the dog! [*Mimics Margery's voice.*] I think the dog must have a cold. I'd like to *kill* him. Oh, my! Oh, Margery! [*Laughs again.*] You'll get used to him—he's a harmless beast! [*Shrieks of laughter again.*]

MARGERY [*very angry*]: Dick, you are perfectly insufferable. Do you realize that you are being—are being offensive? *What* have you come back for? *Why* don't you go away—and stay?

DICK: Gosh! That's a whole-souled invitation! [*Turns to Masters.*] Maybe you will treat me like a white man, sir.

MASTERS [*turning away*]: I care to have nothing whatever to do with you.

DICK: I *am* a Christian! Talk about being persecuted for righteousness sake! If I don't get a crown of glory when they come to be handed out, then somebody has counted wrong! See here, you two! Do you happen to know that I've come back here and got myself late to supper formation and sunk myself to the eyes in demerits and other cruel and unusual punishments, simply and solely to do a good turn? But now I've done and gone and come, I'll be hanged if I don't do the turn, and win a martyr's halo at it. Lieutenant, it's easy to see, sir, that you're—you're—sour on Margery—sir.

MASTERS [*indignantly and haughtily*]: Mr. Harrison, you forget yourself!

DICK: Lieutenant, this is man to man, sir; not cadet to officer. I haven't time to pick words. I'm late to supper formation. But you're all wrong. She doesn't deserve it. I begged her to do the very thing that's happened—to hide me behind the piano some day, and let you—ahem! [*grins*] make love to her, if you'll excuse the expression, sir. And what do you think she said? She said when she stole spoons for a profession, she'd think of it. She said I insulted her. She said I was crazy. I, the pink of sanity! She kicked me out of the house—by a figure of speech—and then you suddenly sneaked in—by a figure of speech—and she stored me back of the piano, like the good girl she is, and she wouldn't peach on me, not she—though she was like a soul in torment when she heard me chuckling at your— Oh, my! [*Begins to laugh, then suddenly stops.*] And there you are! Margery's sweet on you. Oh, I know it! I'm not her cousin for nothing. And now, unless you're both feebleminded, you'll make it up and be happy ever after. While I, Richard Miles Harrison, the only genuine, wingless guardian angel in captivity, a perfect mother to both of you—what happens to me? Tell me that! [*Spreads arms out with tragic gesture.*]

MARGERY: Oh, Dick! You old lamb!

MASTERS: Harrison! Indeed, I don't mean to be unjust!

DICK: Oh, yes! All very well! The dog gets a kind word once in a while, doesn't he? Throw the cur a bone! That's enough for the dog! [*Faces toward Masters.*] I may as well mention, sir, that I'd just proposed to Margery myself. I wanted her awfully—I swear I did! But don't let that interfere with your happiness. Take her! Help yourself! [*Waves hand invitingly toward Margery.*] It's all right enough for one of those rascally cadets. I lose my sweetheart, and I get reported, and when I try to turn the other cheek and set you straight with each other, I get resounding slaps on it. I'm having lots of fun being guardian angel! Think I'll have cards engraved and go into it for a profession! Well [*turning to Margery*] now, I'll accept your invitation and leave. [*Picks up cap from table where he had laid it.*]

MARGERY [*flying at him and clasping his shoulder with both hands*]: Dick! Dear old Dicky! Don't go! You *are* an angel, and I'm sorry I said such things. Won't you forgive me, Dick?

DICK [*head thrown back haughtily, looking down at her*]: Can't say. Don't feel very softened at present. [*Thumps himself tentatively.*]

MASTERS [*going up to the two boldly and taking Margery's hands*]: Margery, is it true—what this big gray angel says—that you—that you *do* care for me?

MARGERY [*looking from one to the other—stammering*]: Oh—oh, Dick—oh! [*Puts her* *face against Masters's arm, then looks up at Dick, then turns to Masters.*] Don't tell—Dick—or anybody, but—but I do! [*Masters puts his arm around her and Dick turns his back squarely.*]

DICK [*after a minute's pause*]: I suppose there's enough plot in this to satisfy you, but you ought to remember it's slow for me.

MARGERY [*pulling hand away from Masters*]: Dick, you are the dearest old thing alive.

DICK [*scornfully*]: Old thing!

MARGERY: And you've done a fine deed to-night and saved two people from great unhappiness.

MASTERS [*with feeling*]: Heaven bless you for it, Harrison.

MARGERY: And I'll find you a girl twice as nice as I am, whom you'll like twice as much as your every-day cousin.

DICK [*shaking his head mournfully*]: No. No—thank you ever so much. I am a broken-hearted man. My love-days are over. [*Face a foot long, but twinkle in the eye.*]

MARGERY: Oh, yes—till to-morrow. But till I find the girl, Dick, you shall play with us always—we three shall be inseparable. Won't we? [*Looks up at Masters.*]

MASTERS [*hesitating*]: Y—yes, certainly; if you wish it.

DICK: Not if I see you first.

MASTERS [*with relieved laugh*]: Anyway, Harrison, you must be—Margery, may I say it?

MARGERY [*nodding*]: Uh—huh. Don't know what it is, but say it.

MASTERS: Well, then, will you be best man at the wedding?

DICK [*enthusiastically*]: I should rather say I would! Come, that's handsome of you, sir—I'd almost as soon be that as the groom. [*Thoughtfully.*] It's less responsibility. And now [*brightening up and turning to Masters*], as far as I see, I'm in for all the penalties the Academy allows, so [*throwing off overcoat and dropping into chair by the fire and giving big sigh of content as he leans back*] to celebrate this auspicious occasion, I might as well stay here with your fiancée, Lieutenant, while you go and report me.

[*CURTAIN*]

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

THE AUTHOR OF "THE SIMPLE LIFE" TO VISIT THIS COUNTRY

THE thousands of Americans who have been reading "The Simple Life" and "By the Fireside" will be interested in the announcement that Charles Wagner is to make his first visit to the United States this autumn. He comes to see the people who have grasped so eagerly his doctrine of "The Simple Life"—of his reception he is assured in advance. He wants to see the President who wrote, "I preach your gospel to my countrymen"; and he wants to study the life of these "countrymen."

While traveling primarily for observation and recreation, Mr. Wagner will deliver lectures and addresses wherever he goes. Owing to the shortness of time—he will be here only during October and November—he will confine his visit to the territory east of Chicago and north of Washington.

Among the interesting results of Mr. Wagner's trip will be the record of his Impressions of America, which will appear in part in McClure's Magazine. What the man who wrote and believes in "The Simple Life" will think of our complex and strenuous existence cannot but interest us all.

ENEMIES OF THE REPUBLIC

ILLINOIS: A TRIUMPH OF PUBLIC OPINION—AFTER AN EIGHT YEARS' POLITICAL WAR, THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS BROUGHT TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE—A MISSOURI PARALLEL

BY

LINCOLN STEFFENS

AUTHOR OF "THE SHAME OF THE CITIES"

ILLINOIS is a Republican state. Missouri, which we studied last, is Democratic. "Graft" knows no politics, but the "good citizen" does. To the grafter a party is but a tool of his trade, and the party to which a majority of the citizens "belong" is his party. He does not belong to it; it belongs to him. The result is that neither of our great parties truly represents us; both stand to-day for graft. They differ upon other, unessential things; they are alike in this, that whichever is in power is the grafter's party. Now, wherever we have gone, we have found that the biggest grafter is Big Business, and Big Business kept changing its party to be of the majority. After Missouri I visited three Republican states—Ohio, New York, and Illinois. The railroad that took me into Illinois turned Republican at the state line. A Trust which had dealt with the Democrats in Missouri appeared in New York with the Republicans. So with another Trust—in Missouri a Democrat, at home in Ohio it is a Republican. And so it goes in national politics. Wall Street, and all that "Wall Street" connotes, was Republican till President Roosevelt, refusing to acknowledge the privilege of capital, enforced the law against a combination of railroads. Then Wall Street began plotting with the Republican leaders for the nomination of a "safe man" for President, and, when that "safe man" died, looked to the Democrats—looked with its great campaign contribution for a bribe—and corrupt Democratic leaders, itching for the great financial graft, began search for a "safe man."

How Parties Deliver Good Citizens

If the good citizen would do as the corrupt politician and the corrupting business man do, shift freely from one party to the other as the change served his interest, then both parties would represent good citizenship. They would differ—more than they do now—on broad questions of public policy, but they would both stand as they do not now, for the public interest. But the good citizen is "loyal to party." Half the loyalty that is betrayed by parties would, if devoted to the state and the nation, save the country and the parties, too! Such independence, however, would mean non-partizanship in state and national politics, and the good citizen is only just learning, with many a qualm of conscience, to vote independently in municipal elections. In state and national politics he votes too constantly, not for his state and the United States, but for "his party." Hence his party can deliver his vote. Hence his party does deliver his vote in Ohio, New York, and Illinois, as in Missouri—to all comers with "pulls" and bribes.

What Corruption Really Is

This is serious since we realized, in Missouri, that "bribery and corruption" are not accidental and occasional, but general and deliberate. I quoted the declaration made in open court by Judge Priest, one of the leaders of the Missouri bar, that bribery, at the most, is a "conventional crime." And he was right. Bribery out there was "a custom of the country," and political corruption was a system. And this system, laid wide open by Joseph W. Folk, proved to be, not an evil of government, but the government itself. Corruption had worked a revolution there. The representative democracy described in the state constitution of Missouri was a thing of paper. Drawn by dead men, it was dead. In its stead stood a reorganization of society, a commercial oligarchy, a government of special, not of common interests; and this, the actual government of this great state, was not a creation of paper and ink; you could not study it in the state library. We traced its superstructure in the crimes, the indictments, and the confessions of living men, and we saw that its foundation was laid, true and nice, upon the exact adjustment of the sordid ambitions of the political leaders of Missouri to the financial lusts of her captains of industry.

Political corruption, then, is a force by which a representative democracy is transformed into an oligarchy representative of special interests, and the medium of the revolution is the party.

So we must recognize parties and take up next a Republican state—Illinois. Illinois is not so demonstrably corrupt as Missouri. Other Republican states are worse, but these two offer just now a remarkable parallel, superficially in this, that at the same time Joseph W. Folk, the Democratic Circuit Attorney who had "done his duty" in St. Louis, was running for the Democratic nomination for Governor of Democratic Missouri, Charles S. Deneen, the Republican State's Attorney (the same office), who had "done his duty" in Chicago, was running for the Republican nomination for Governor of Republican Illinois. There were many unessential differences, and we shall note them as we go along, but fundamentally the parallel is still more striking and significant in this, that while the Democrats of Missouri were being asked to take back from Democratic boodlers the control of their party, the Republicans of Illinois were being asked to take back from Republican boodlers the control of their party. Boodle was the issue in both campaigns; boodle is the underlying issue in most American political campaigns, but here it was a party issue. Politicians, anxious to preserve their parties, have always pleaded for "reform within the party." Well, here we have it. Here we have the fighting done within the party, and that is right. For parties do rule us, and if American citizens will "stick to party," then it is important for all of us to know what each party decides within itself to represent: all of us or a few of us, the common interests which ask for nothing but law, order, and fair play, and pay for these in taxes that sustain the state; or those special interests which seek special favors and pay for them in bribes which corrupt the state.

Municipal Reform Impossible by Itself

Folk began the movement which his candidacy is bringing to a logical conclusion. Deneen did not. This does not matter. We are interested not in the men, but in the issue for which they stand, and the issue arose in both states in the same way—in a fight for municipal reform and the failure to get it. Fortunate failure! "Municipal reform" is a mean ideal. We have talked about it for years now, till it has come to be the highest aim of American citizenship. But think of it for a moment: It is not the cities alone that are corrupt, but the states also and the United States, and we all know that this is so. Yet we of the cities say, "Give us good government in the cities where we live, and the states and the United States may go to the deuce." It is a mistake. It is more than a mistake. Municipal reform, all by itself, is impossible. City government and state government are of one sovereignty, and, as for corruption, the city and the state are in one system and the city man and the "upstate" man have to work together to get what each needs.

The big grafter knows this; there is nothing narrow and "provincial" about him, and Folk and the Chicago reformers got over their municipal narrowness by following the big grafter. They started right. They did not begin their reform by passing and enforcing laws to make other people good. They saw early that the "best citizens" were the worst grafters, and they went after them and the municipal legislators who were selling out to them. Folk's method was that of the criminal prosecutor and he put the municipal bribe givers and bribe takers on trial, and when they appealed to the state courts, the pursuit into the state taught the Circuit Attorney of St. Louis that boodling was not a crime of city individuals, but the established method of conducting public business in both city and state. Boodle was a question of government, and Mr. Folk, in order to finish his job, had to go into politics, and he went into politics. Declaring boodle to be the issue in both city and state, he appealed to the people.

The Corrupt System of Chicago

The Chicago reformers went into politics at the first plunge. The system that confronted them was like that of St. Louis; it was the typical form of municipal government in all unreformed American cities. The citizens were divided between two parties. These parties were organized by two groups of "leaders": Robert E. Burke, John Powers, Mayor John P. Hopkins, and Roger C. Sullivan, "Democrats"; and William Lorimer, "Doc" T. N. Jamieson, James Pease, et al, "Republicans." (Others there were, but those named are active to-day.) They had a rough working agreement by which the Democrats took the city, the Republicans Cook County, and these governments they ran "for the good of the party." That was their highest spoken sentiment—not the good of the community, but of the party, and the good of the party came to mean the good of the leaders and their friends. They and their friends were in politics for "what there was in it for them." Thus the government of Chicago and Cook County was not a government in the interest of the people.

The followers of the two groups of leaders, operating like bandits, held up citizens and robbed them, just as train robbers and brigands do. Everybody had to pay for everything, lawful and unlawful; taxpayers had to help the tax-collector defraud the city, and shared with him the "reduction"; merchants paid to violate ordinances; contractors to be freed from inspections; health board supervision was largely blackmail; and the police operated a system such as that which we found exposed in Minneapolis. The police of Chicago did not protect life and property; they protected the criminals; they licensed burglars and hold-up men by districts, guarded them while at work, and shared in their booty.

How Corruption Produces an Oligarchy

Now this is preposterous, but this is not the worst. This is crime, and if, when they had committed their crimes, the criminals had run away, all might have been well. But these were not private robbers, they were public plunderers; they not only robbed the citizens, they plundered the city. And they not only plundered the city and county once or twice, they operated methodically and systematically. And, they not only stayed by the loot, they stayed as judges, legislators, and executives. They were the government, and they sold the law, they rotted the sources of the law, they gave away public property, and they carried off the self-respect of the citizens of Chicago. For hold-up men and vulgar criminals were not the only "friends" of the leaders. Their circle included some of the leading citizens of the city. All men who were against the law were with the party rings; all men whose interests ran counter to the public interests were satisfied customers of this traffic in a people. Thus, though boodle was all that the politicians were after, their business was the sale of privileges; and the effect of the establishment of that business as the actual government, was to transform the representative democracy of Chicago into an oligarchy—representative of privileged classes.

Our Privileged Classes

Nor is this all. The classes favored were: first, those who—like pickpockets, hold-up men, gamblers, and keepers of saloons and bawdy houses—wanted to break the law; second, those who—like tax-dodgers, railroads, and established big businesses—wanted to evade the law; and third, those who—like traction, gas, and other public utility companies—wanted to abuse general and procure and misuse special laws. In other words, boodle and graft, the "evils" happy pessimists speak of so lightly, had turned the city government of Chicago into an oligarchy of the worst citizens, of the enemies of the city.

Two Kinds of Municipal Reform

The Chicago reformers attacked the third form of corruption, that of active boodling for franchises and other special ordinances. As I have pointed out in "The Shame of the Cities," there are two main roads to reform. One goes down among the vulgar criminal classes to the correction of obvious police scandals, and leads to what we call "good government." This is easily achieved. Minneapolis got it in a summer. New York has fought longer for it, but has it at last—from Tammany Hall! The other road takes the reformer higher up among his own friends through high finance to higher politics, and leads, when successful, to an awakened public opinion against corrupt misrepresentation in government—to what I call self-government. Chicago's Municipal Voters' League had every incentive to fight for "good government." The city had police graft and administrative abuses as bad as any Minneapolis or New York ever had. But John H. Hamline, William Kent, and other young men who were serving as aldermen, and the best of the newspapers, advised the League to strike at the council, and George E. Cole and his associates struck at the council. And when they struck there they struck the trail we traveled with Folk from St. Louis, the trail that runs between the two great parallels, business and politics, out of the city, up through the state to the United States.

Council Reform and the Political Rings

The council was the heart of the corrupt system of Chicago. The aldermen, supposedly elected to represent the city, but really chosen by the leaders of the two parties, were selling out the city. Finley P. Dunne ("Mr. Dooley"), a reporter in those days, described many of the members as criminals marked by nature as such. Two-thirds of them were organized into a bi-partizan "combine," which operated under the direction of a "good business man," Martin B. Madden, president of the Western Stone Company. "I rounded up the boys," said Johnnie Powers (Democrat), "and Madden (Republican) told 'em what for." There we have the linking of the two rings, political and financial. Back of the Democrats in the "combine" were the party bosses—"Bobbie" Burke, Mayor Hopkins and Roger Sullivan, and back of the Republicans were the Republican bosses—Billy Lorimer, "Doc" Jamieson, Pease, and others. Lorimer, Jamieson and Company did not direct or share in the bribery of Republican aldermen. The city council was not a Republican graft; the Republicans, as I explained, had the county. But just as the Republican sheriff, in return for non-interference by the Democratic police in his horse-racing graft, let the police alone in vice graft, so for general immunity from all hindrances in their county contracts, the Republican leaders delivered over to the Democrats the Republican aldermen to vote with the "combine" that sold out municipal legislation. This was the bi-partizan political system back of the corrupt council.

In front of the council were two financial rings. One of these was intact when I began my study of Illinois; this is the ring which centers in the Chicago National Bank—John R. Walsh, president. Walsh is a Democrat. He is the owner of the Democratic party organ, *The Chronicle*, and the power behind the throne of the Democratic bosses. The power behind the throne of the Republican bosses is John M. Smyth, the head of one of Chicago's "big stores." Smyth (Republican) is a director of the bank of Walsh (Demoocrat), and its former cashier, now vice-president, is Fred M. Blount, an active Republican politician.

The great graft of the Chicago Republicans is public contracts, and they control the sources of contracts—state and county boards and, through judges like Hanecy, and the Governor, park boards. Lorimer was a street-car driver, but in politics he became a contractor and a friend of Walsh. Walsh is treasurer of the South Park Board; William Best, a director of the Chicago National Bank, is a member of the board, and so is Lyman A. Walton, vice-president of (Walsh's) Equitable Trust Company. Blount has been treasurer of the West Park Board and of the Sanitary Board. The latter is the board which has spent millions to reverse the Chicago River, and make it, the city's sewer, run out of, instead of into, the Lake. This developed a water power which the board once proposed to sell to a private corporation. Thomas M. Smyth, a relative of John M. Smyth, is an ex-president of the board. Contracts from all these boards have gone sometimes to a Democratic firm like Lyden and Drews (Lyden is a nephew of ex-Mayor Hopkins), more often to a Lorimer firm. Walsh's institutions bond public officials and public officials deposit funds in his institutions. So do many of the politicians and sporting people. Other banks share in all this "legitimate graft," of course; the Chicago National group does not get it all. Here, briefly outlined, is one great business ring which profits by, is satisfied with, and gives financial aid and moral support to, the debased political system of the city, county, and state.

The other ring, now broken, was that of which the world-famous promoter, Charles T. Yerkes, was the center. He went to Chicago as a representative of Widener and Elkins, the street railway "financiers" of Philadelphia. He bought *The Inter Ocean*, the newspaper organ of the "stalwart" Republicans, and became a financial leader. He banked at the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank, John J. Mitchell, president. Now Mitchell is to Chicago what J. P. Morgan is to New York. But when Yerkes, recognized and beaten by Chicago, organized his street railway properties to leave them, the financial scheme involved a capitalization which could only be floated upon the theory that a new franchise was obtainable, and upon terms which it is incredible would be granted by an honest city council; yet Mitchell in Chicago and Morgan in New York helped float this plan for the Union Traction Company. Such financial coöperation is moral support, and Yerkes had that from Mitchell and from other banks; he had it from the financial world generally. And when you consider the ramifications of influence from such banks in both rings, their directors, stockholders, customers and friends, and from associated institutions, companies, and businesses, you can begin to understand what upheld the Hopkins-Sullivan Democrats, the Lorimer-Jamieson Republicans, the corrupt city council, and the whole rotten system of Chicago graft. What I have given is but a superficial sketch of the two main groups of those respectable powers which the Chicago reformers attacked when they attacked the Chicago City Council.

In 1895, when the Municipal Voters' League began its work, these financial powers had big plans before them. We shall follow two of them. The People's Gas and Coke Company wanted to combine all the Chicago gas companies and make a monopoly. The Hopkins-Sullivan Democrats, knowing this, had put through the council, when Hopkins was mayor, a franchise for the Ogden Gas Company. The organizers boast that they paid no bribes, but why should they? In the deal were Martin B. Madden, Johnnie Powers, Thomas Gahan, Roger Sullivan, and others. Chicago believes Mayor Hopkins had a two-elevenths interest, but I was most urgently persuaded to think that he had not. Say he wasn't in the deal. His crowd was, and among them were the politicians who sold franchises to business men; why shouldn't they give one to themselves? The scheme had all the marks of what, in Pennsylvania, would be called a "mace"—a company organized to sell out at blackmail prices to a "trust"; and, as a matter of fact, some fellows in the deal did come pretty near blackmail in their efforts to make the People's Company buy them out. Moreover, the two companies are working amicably together now under a financial settlement that made fortunes for the political promoters. But, I must not get ahead of my story. In 1895 the gas deal had been passed through the "Democratic" Chicago council and was ready for the Republican state legislature.

The other big plan was Yerkes's own. Many Chicago traction franchises were expiring, and the companies wanted to have them extended. The corrupt municipal system being in good order, the companies could have had from the city council anything bribery could buy, but the council was unable under the law to grant an extension of franchises for more than twenty years, and that was not enough for Yerkes. Some of his bonds ran longer than that, and, besides, he had learned his financial politics in Pennsylvania where they give franchises for 999 years and "in perpetuity." Yerkes wanted a franchise for at least 50 years.

Yerkes Goes to the State System

And he tried to get it. Where? From the Illinois state legislature. Yerkes was a Big Business man, and, like the gas men, he understood the whole machinery of government as it is. He did not try first for home rule in Chicago; his plans took him out into the state. He was not dependent upon the boodlers of Chicago. Yerkes knew that corruption was a state as well as a municipal system in Pennsylvania, and when, in 1895, he went to Springfield, the capital of Illinois, he went confident that he would find the system there. And it was there.

The Old State System

It had been there for at least twenty years and closely resembled that of Missouri. The railroads and other great corporations of the state had built it up, and it was theirs. They hadn't much use for it in Yerkes's day; they had long before got about all they required. They were vulnerable to taxation, but they controlled the State Board of Equalization (of taxes). About the only other use they had for the system was to prevent adverse legislation, and since, as the railroad men say, Illinois is "fair" and harbors no anti-railroad sentiment, they were, and they are, in very little danger. Nevertheless, with a few notable exceptions, the roads have always kept in touch with politics all along their lines, and maintained the system which still is the actual government of Illinois. The head of it is, not the railroad lobby as in Missouri, but the bi-partizan group of senators, called the "senate combine," which is an old institution now reduced to refined blackmail and the orderly protection, for lump fees, of special interests. The House, more unwieldy and changeable, has to be moved by individual bribes of various amounts, and there is often scandal and quarreling over the division of the spoils; but the "regular business" in the House is done by committees which the Speaker appoints. To complete the legislative system, the Governor should be either a figurehead or the boss.

There are railroad officials and corporation managers in Illinois of sufficient moral development to denounce corruption and oppose it, and they think well of themselves because they never boodle. But the corrupt system which their roads established remains standing ready for the service of all who seek to plunder the people. And when Yerkes arrived, it was at his service. The system put through his 50 years act for him. There was plentiful talk of money paid; when, after the session, Speaker Meyer died, a large sum in new thousand dollar bills was found in his safe deposit box. But Governor Altgeld, a Democrat, and neither a figurehead nor the boss of the system, vetoed the bill. The old system was not in good working order.

Yerkes, a great man in his class, set about making it go. In a quiet, "business-like" way, he "favored" John R. Tanner for governor on the Republican ticket for the election of 1896. Tanner was chairman of the Republican Central Committee. As we noted in Missouri, the chairman of a state committee is a powerful factor in a corrupt state system. Tanner came as near being a state boss as any man in Illinois politics, and he was "safe." He was nominated, and in that presidential year "good old Republican" Illinois elected him with a "solid Republican" legislature. Thus was the Republican state system repaired.

All clear before him, Yerkes found trouble brewing in his rear. The Democratic city system was getting out of order. The Chicago reformers were making progress. They were cutting down the corrupt majority of the council and organizing the public opinion which the great Chicago newspapers had developed against franchise stealing. Better men were chosen aldermen, and the League and the newspapers watched them and made the public watch and understand. By the spring of 1897, traction and Yerkes had become an issue in the city, and Carter H. Harrison was elected mayor on it. Yerkes was not afraid of Harrison. "Bobbie" Burke, the Democratic boss, had nominated the young man, and, though Harrison talked inimically, Burke would probably control him; and, anyhow, Yerkes used to say that "every man has his price."

Yerkes Relies upon the State System

To make sure of his plans, however, Yerkes determined to make the perfected state system do the whole job for him. Instead of having it grant the city council power to extend traction franchises, he would have the state legislature pass bills granting the extension outright. And a set of measures, called the Humphrey Bills, which gave the companies fifty years more of life, were introduced in the Senate. This was an outrage, but it rendered a great service to Chicago. The Humphrey Bills began for the city one of the greatest lessons a city can learn—that the state is a part of the municipal government and that municipal reformers must include state reform. The mayoralty campaign was going on when these bills appeared, and the candidates, their orators, and the newspapers lashed themselves and the voters into a white heat over them. These bills violated the principle of "Home Rule," and mass-meetings denounced them in burning resolutions which spoke of "financial anarchists," "bribe givers and bribe takers," and ordered posted on bill boards as political traitors all Cook County senators who voted for the Humphrey Bills. The city recognized the real enemies of the city. John Maynard Harlan, a candidate for mayor, and the city's most effective orator, called a roll of directors and stockholders of the Chicago City Railway Company; these were the most self-respecting men in Chicago—Erskine M. Phelps, George H. Wheeler, Samuel W. Allerton, Marshall Field—but their company was interested with Yerkes; their counsel was with him at Springfield; and the town believed that their company's money was being paid out with his in bribes. This is the way Mr. Harlan called the roll:

> And now we have got to talk plain language. We have got to hold the right people responsible. We have got to name the directors of these companies; call them up. Erskine M. Phelps, I put you on the stand; take your seat; take your oath before the people of Chicago; place your hand upon the Bible of the people; take your oath, and let me question you, a director of the city railway. Erskine M. Phelps, do you know that your general counsel, do you know that the president of your company is down at Springfield—or if not there in person, by his attorney and representative—for the purpose of taking part in a grand larceny of the people of Chicago? There for the purpose of burglarizing the City of Chicago? If you don't know that we tell it to you now. Your agent, your president, your general counsel, formerly an honored member of the bar, that has done great service to this community, your general counsel is there engaged in this vile conspiracy. Now you know it, you know it well, Erskine M. Phelps, and you—should stop it.
>
> Marshall Field, merchant prince, the founder of a great museum, a museum that shall be the home of art, literature, and science; Marshall Field, whose voice is heard, when he chooses to make it heard, in the councils of the nation; Marshall Field, to whom there has been no such word as failure in all his private undertakings; Marshall Field, stockholder, influential citizen; Marshall Field, bring your influence to bear as a stockholder and stop this robbery.

The People of the State Aroused

This hurt, and it helped too, for it aroused public opinion all over the state, and state opinion was needed, for when the reformers and Mayor Harrison, elected, went down to Springfield to protest, they found the state system at work for Yerkes and it was at work for the gas companies also. It was one of the worst sessions in the history of the state. Everybody—captains of industry and bosses, bootblacks, hack-drivers, and chambermaids — talked graft; all men seemed to have money, and the bars and poker games were awash with it. It was a system in joyous operation, and anybody—the reformers, Chicago, the whole state—could see just what it was and whose it was and who were directing it.

The State System at Work

Yerkes sat in a chair at the head of the stairs in the rotunda of the capitol; he represented the American business man. In the executive chamber was Governor Tanner; he represented the state machine. William Lorimer occupied a chair in the senate chamber; he represented the Republican party organization of Cook County. In the lobby moved "Doc" Jamieson (Republican) and Roger Sullivan (Democrat). The Democrats of Cook County turn over to the Republicans the legislators they elect just as the Republicans of Chicago deliver Republican aldermen to the Democrats. But Roger Sullivan and his followers represented the Hopkins-Sullivan-Gahan Democrats at Springfield, and the two groups of "leaders" labored together. One day when Mayor Harrison, there to speak for his city, came up the stairs, Yerkes laughed at him, and well he might; for with both party leaders, the Governor, and the state delivering over the city to him, what could the Mayor of the city do? It was absurd. The Mayor protested and the citizens met in mass, but their state government did not represent them; it represented "Business"; special interests, not the common interests. And the gas and the traction bills were advanced.

The Gas Deal Through the System

There was a hitch over the gas bills. They went to committee with the understanding that everything was "arranged," and gas stock rose. The bills did not come out, and the stock dropped. Then "all was settled" and the stock revived. Again the bill hung, and all was unsettled, especially the stock. This happened time and time again, till the impression was spread abroad that the People's and the Ogden were fighting. Then the bills came out and were passed. It developed afterwards that while petty legislators may have received cash bribes for gas legislation, the "senate combine" and the bosses were taking their pay out of the stock market, and the succession of favorable reports and apparent failures were only for stock-jobbing purposes. After the session, Lorimer, Jamieson, and others had plenty of money, and people were asking them "where they got it." The answer in the public mind was that they "got it" for putting the gas bills through with the traction deal, and they were silent for two years. Then they suddenly explained. Their belated explanation differed somewhat from that just given, but it admits that they received gas stock and is full of accidental interest.

In 1899 these Republican bosses were accused of a wish to make John W. Gates a United States senator. When such politicians choose such a "business man" for such high office, it is a safe working hypothesis to assume that the man himself or the business he represents has been at least a steady contributor to campaign funds. This is a feature of the system which we shall examine some day. The Chicago newspapers had to account for the sudden rise of this great financial "sport" to such "bad eminence" and they recalled that in the rush of business men to the scandalous legislature of 1897, Gates was there with two bills for his Illinois Steel and Wire Company, and that Lorimer and Jamieson helped him to pass them. Now Lorimer and Jamieson were for Gates for United States senator. Why? Report had it that Gates had purchased for them at 82, two thousand shares of gas stock apiece; and that when the gas bills passed, Lorimer sold his at 93, while Jamieson held on till he got 103 for his and cleared $40,000. The bosses liked this story, for the Gates bills were "honest bills." Here is Jamieson's statement as printed in the Chicago *Evening Journal* and never publicly denied:

The Bosses' Explanation

"As far as the stock story goes, it is correct. It is also true that the start of it was the four thousand shares of gas stock which Mr. Gates margined for us. It was in return for our looking out for Bills 90 and 108 (Gates's), which were liable to be overlooked in the rush of the closing day of the legislature. They were perfectly honest bills, there was no opposition to them, and our influence simply went to the extent of having them called up for discussion and passage. There were no views or votes against them, and naturally they passed. Mr. Gates in return gave us the gas stock and we carried it through the big rise. With the money made we have made other deals. We have speculated freely and I may say with some success, and I do not care who knows it. There is nothing about the entire transaction to conceal, and perhaps it will answer the question some of our enemies have asked, 'Where did you get it?' Since it is out, I have no desire to deny or conceal it."

"As for Mr. Gates's candidacy, that is another matter. I do not know what his ambitions are. But I will say this, that he can have anything I can give him or help him to get. He has been a heavy contributor to the Republican campaign funds for many years and has taken a big interest in state politics. He is a big man in this state, brainy, influential, and a leading manufacturer. He would make a good senator and he can have my support whenever he wants it. I am making no announcement of his candidacy, neither do I deny it. He could have a very large portion of Cook County back of him."

Lorimer, congressman and boss, said: "I have no desire to conceal anything. What Doctor Jamieson has said I endorse, and I am inclined to think Mr. Gates would get a good chance of winning if he entered the race as a candidate for senator."

Gates did not go to the Senate, so we may pass this side-light on the way "the system" produces United States senators. Pass also, but note well, the exposure this "explanation" makes of the character of the Cook County leaders of the Republican party of Illinois. The fact of immediate interest is that the gas bills went through the legislature and were signed by the Governor, and that Chicago did not care. The city had been torn up again and again for the mains of companies that promised competition to the trust, and always the competitors sold out to the trust. They were at least relieved of that condition, for the purpose of the bills was to create a monopoly.

Illinois to Chicago's Rescue

Chicago concentrated all its attention upon the Humphrey Bills, and that attention began to take effect. These bills had come down from the "senate combine" to the House, and were in a fair way of being passed there, when the agitation in Chicago and the fight of the Chicago newspapers, which circulate throughout the state, aroused the country people who began to speak to their representatives in the lower house. There was no direct appeal from Chicago to the country. I have never yet come upon an instance where a state, having been made intelligent concerning any sound, essential demand of a city, has failed to respond, but few cities have learned to confide in the "farmers," as they call them, and Chicago had not. Chicago's case was presented only indirectly to Illinois, but the state acted. Illinois killed the Humphrey Bills in the House.

That did not beat the bosses. Chicago's chief stated objection to the Humphrey Bills was that they violated the home rule principle, so Yerkes substituted another, called the Allen Bill, which did not grant outright the fifty-year extension of franchises, but permitted the Chicago council to do so.

From the point of view of the country this was fair since it left the problem to Chicago, but as Chicago saw it the move was an appeal from the state system back to the city system and, with the implication of threatened bribery of the council, the Allen Bill threw the city into a fresh tempest of passion. The swing of public opinion was so swift that even the Allen Bill seemed in danger. The country members had "lost their nerve" and the bosses saw that the measure must be advanced under the gavel. Speaker Curtis was afraid to use force, and he suddenly developed a "gum boil" and was sent off in a special car to Mammoth Cave. The Speaker pro tem. hammered the bill through to the third reading; then it was passed by both houses and Governor Tanner signed it.

Traction Fight Back in Chicago

The next step for Yerkes now was to get a Chicago council that would pass an ordinance to carry the Allen Law into effect. The outlook was discouraging, for the town was ringing with wrath, but Yerkes and his friends in both parties went quietly to work. The honest newspapers and the League also went to work, however, more loudly, and their appeal was to the people to send up aldermen that Yerkes couldn't buy. How the people responded, I have told in my article on council reform in Chicago. But there is a part of the story I did not tell, Mayor Harrison's part. The League had tried to get enough honest aldermen to organize the council but failed. Johnnie Powers beat them and the combine controlled the committees and had a majority for Yerkes's Lyman ordinance, which was to put the Allen Law into effect. But the Mayor presides in the Chicago council and he has a veto which it takes a two-thirds vote to override. Carter H. Harrison was the key to the situation.

Yerkes "Sees" Mayor Harrison

The time was come for Yerkes to "see" Mayor Harrison. The promoter had called often on the young man in the city hall, but always the Mayor's secretary or some one else was by. Yerkes asked the Mayor to dismiss the witness or go into a separate room, but the Mayor never would. Now, with the council organized and ready, Yerkes had to "see" Harrison and alone, and he saw him alone, as Yerkes thought; but there was a witness, so I know that Yerkes said that he could not understand why the young Mayor was against traction. "Many of my friends in the deal, are your friends," he said. "Some of your friends are in it. Why are you against it?" And the Mayor answered that. Then Yerkes put to the Mayor the great question:

"Mr. Mayor, what is it that you want?"

When the Mayor answered that, Mr. Yerkes saw the beginning of the end of his Chicago career. He did not give up at once. The fight proceeded in the council, and it was a fight indeed. Reform aldermen were bought over and Harrison Democrats weakened, but the reformers put spies on their men and Harrison put the whip on his. And the system had its troubles too. Aldermen in the boodle combine were asked by their children if what the other "scholars said at school was true, that their papa was a boodler"? Willing boodlers coming home at night found a mass committee from the ward waiting to ask them if they were going to "sell us out to Yerkes"? One alderman finding his house closed against him one night, knocked for admittance and, when his wife answered, she asked through the closed door if he was "for Chicago or for Yerkes?" Some of these men declared they would have to "go back, on the party," and many more would have fallen honest, for a mob, organized by Harrison Democrats, stood ready with ropes at the crisis, to hang all "traitors." The council did not make the Allen Law effective; it did not grant a fifty-year extension of franchise for "nothing but boodle." Mayor Harrison defeated the treason of his own party.

National Democrats Speak for Yerkes

Chicago is thinking seriously now of throwing aside Mr. Harrison for a mayor who will give the city administrative reform, and any one who will talk with this remarkable man must feel that a change is necessary. He has made many improvements. He has abolished some intolerable abuses. With all that he has accomplished, however, graft and inefficiency persist, and I could not find in his own mind any hope of such thorough-going administrative reform as that which Chicago now seems bent upon. No, that will not come from Mr. Harrison; he does not, in his heart, care enough about good government to give it. But Harrison does care about self-government; he really has a sense of government for a people. I don't know how he came by it, whether it was born in him or was acquired from his political experience, nor does that matter. Harrison is not merely a Democrat; he is a democrat with a small d. For the democracy, he withstood Yerkes and all Yerkes's money. And he withstood also Richard Croker. The Tammany boss called on the ambitious young mayor just before a National Democratic Convention. He spoke for himself, William C. Whitney, and other National Democrats, and his subject was the future of the party and Mr. Harrison. As the Mayor once put it with a laugh: "Croker took me up on the mountain and showed me the cities of the earth." And while Harrison contemplated the view, Croker said that he had a friend, Mr. Yerkes, and that anything Mayor Harrison could do for that friend would be appreciated by Mr. Croker and by Croker's and Whitney's Wall Street friends, whom Yerkes had loaded up with Chicago traction stock. The Chicago Democratic mayor put aside the temptation of the National Democrats, and he cut loose from some of the same sort of "Democrats" at home. He did not recognize John R. Walsh. He fought Johnnie Powers and his Democratic combine. He finally dropped "Bobbie" Burke, his own Democratic boss. And when leaders of the Hopkins-Sullivan-Gahan wing of the Cook County Democracy came to him to sign an ordinance to permit them to sell out their Ogden Gas Company and complete the deal with the People's Gas and Coke Company, he refused them also. The two companies have finally come to an understanding with John R. Walsh, Roger Sullivan, etc., on the Ogden board; and C. K. G. Billings, chairman of the People's board, on the board of Walsh's bank. But they could not combine legally, and it was Harrison who foiled them. Harrison has lost all these leaders of the "business end" of his own party, and he had beaten them year by year till this spring William R. Hearst came along with his anti-trust boom for the Presidency and combined with those fellows who have sold out the Democracy to trusts. With such help the Hopkins-Sullivan-Burke-Powers Democracy rose and defeated the Harrison Democracy. Let Chicago put Harrison aside and go on its way, as it must, but the city should acknowledge that this man has served well the City of Chicago and American democracy.

Fighting Back in the State Again

But this is a Republican article. Yerkes, beaten in Chicago, was looking back to the state again. And Chicago, victorious in Chicago, was also looking back to the state. Yerkes asked only time and no legislation. Chicago demanded the repeal of the Allen Law in the session of 1899. Yerkes's hope was in the state system; Chicago's was in the people of Illinois, and this time the appeal was direct; not systematic, but emotional and intimate, and the country papers took it up. Chicago asked the state to keep out of the legislature every man who had voted for the Allen Law, and—I'd like to have every city in every state grasp the significance of the result of this cry of Chicago to Illinois—of sixteen retiring senators who voted for the act, but two were reëlected; and of the eighty-two representatives who voted for it, but fourteen were reëlected.

By this verdict the state system was thrown out of order once more, and it had to be rebuilt. The "senate combine" was reorganized, but it was timid, and Lawrence Y. Sherman, one of the fourteen representatives reëlected over their Allen vote, was elected Speaker of the House. But Sherman, a lean, long, fighting countryman, "deceived," he said, "by Lorimer," was swearing angry at the Cook County ring, and when he organized the House, he knew what he was about. It was his, not Yerkes's, not Lorimer's, and it was going to repeal the Allen Law "first off." No Lorimer-Jamieson leader dared approach Sherman, so Yerkes himself sent for him and wanted the Speaker to "gavel" the repeal down.

"Will the Allen Law be repealed?" he asked Sherman.

"I don't know," said Sherman, "but there will be a roll-call."

"If there's a roll-call, the bill will be repealed," said the Captain of Industry.

"Do you think I would stand up there and suspend a roll-call on a measure so important as that?" Sherman asked.

Then Yerkes became angry. "You don't dare let the Allen Law be repealed. No man can turn tail on our interests and live politically."

There was the voice of the system, the sentiment of Big Business. Sherman dared, and Sherman has had to fight for his political life; but he lives politically by fighting. And he lives in Illinois, too. Yerkes lives in New York and London. There was a roll-call on the Allen repeal, and it was carried with only one or two votes against it. The Senate passed it on up to Governor

Tanner, and the Governor signed it. That ended traction legislation in the interest of the franchise boodlers; and it ended the use of the state government as a system for turning out laws for special interests. But it did not destroy the system itself.

Chicago Takes the Aggressive

Mayor Harrison and the Chicago reformers, strengthened in the city council, took the aggressive now. They could refuse to extend franchises to the street railways, but they would have to let the companies run over the line since the city had no power to take the property. They did not all want "municipal ownership," but the city had to obtain from the state legislature power to receive back the property in order to carry on negotiations to compel fair terms. They might not want to exercise that power, but they had to have it. They asked the legislature of 1899 for it. The legislators, afraid of the whole subject, would not touch any phase of it, and nothing was done. Negotiations with the companies proceeded, and the disposition of the city council, mayor and reformers was to be fair, but the traction people could not give up their faith in corrupt force. They would not settle. In 1901 the city returned to the Springfield legislature with a comprehensive bill for a general street railway law, but the state system was being reorganized and it was strong enough to strangle the city's bill in committee.

Chicago Takes Up Legislative Reform

That brought home to some of the Chicago reformers with full force the truth that the state legislature, being a part of their municipal government, was as much in need of systematic study and improvement as the council. That was as far as they saw. They did not yet realize that the legislative system is but a part of the whole state system, that this system is rooted in the corruption of the lesser cities, the towns and country districts, and that general state reform is as necessary as municipal reform in Chicago. But Chicago reformers make their observations, not in a study, but on the firing line, and they see only what is right before them. They shoot at what they see, however, and in 1901 they organized a Legislative Voters' League for Cook County, with George E. Cole as president and Hoyt King as secretary. This League applies to the nomination and election of senators and representatives from Chicago the same methods that proved so effective for aldermanic reform, viz.: it keeps records of legislators' votes and conduct, publishes them, and advises upon their nomination and election. Reform in Chicago always organizes, informs and helps direct the public opinion aroused, and its leaders wield that tremendous power with tact, political skill, and common sense, and with effect—as they proved so dramatically at the next session of the legislature, the session of 1903.

Chicago was bound to have its enabling legislation. Yerkes was gone but his representatives and successors and the Lorimer-Jamieson Republican ring were bound to have no legislation. There was a new governor, Richard Yates, but Lorimer had led a convention stampede to nominate him and he was "with the party." The legislature was Republican, as usual. Lawrence Y. Sherman and a group of independent Republicans, called the "Fighting Forty," were preparing to represent Chicago, but the Chicago bosses organized the house with John H. Miller for Speaker. There were rumors that the newspapers and the Legislative Voters' League had warned and won over the "senate combine," but it was the same old bi-partizan combine, and the bosses trusted it. The situation seemed to be in Lorimer's hands when the representatives of the Municipal and Legislative Voters' Leagues, of the city council, and of all the candidates that were running for mayor in the pending Chicago campaign, looked it over at Springfield. Mr. Edwin Burritt Smith, who was there as special counsel to the city council's Traction Committee, sums it up thus in his article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1904: "It was understood that, as a condition of his election, the Speaker was required to promise to carry out Hinman's (the editor of Yerkes's 'Republican' *Inter Ocean*) orders on all street railway measures and to use the gavel when necessary to defeat objectionable legislation. Mr. Gus Nohe—Lorimer's member from his own legislative district—when asked whether there was to be any traction legislation, replied: 'I don't know. I do whatever the old man (Lorimer) tells me; and he tells me to do about traction as Hinman says.' Hinman himself announced that there would be no traction legislation at that session."

Chicago Bosses Against Chicago

Congressman Lorimer, the boss, did not want to appear at Springfield, because he was running a "good business man" for mayor on the Republican ticket in Chicago, and his candidate was for traction legislation. But one of the city's bills, drawn by Walter L. Fisher, of the Municipal Voters' League, was going through the Senate. This was the Mueller Bill, and the "combine," under the whip of the League, the Chicago newspapers, and public opinion generally, sent the measure down to the House. Lorimer had to go to Springfield, and he took personal charge in the House. It was indeed an emergency. The Mueller Bill was safely buried in the Municipal Committee, but clearly, with the lobby full of Chicago reformers and committees from citizens' associations, to say nothing of his own "business man for mayor"—all demanding legislation—some bill had to pass. Lorimer gave one day the word for action, and both parties in the House held caucuses that evening. The result was bad—"for the organization." Lorimer sent for the legislators one by one, and late at night called a conference in his own room in the Leland Hotel, of certain ring-leaders, the Chicago Aldermanic Committee, Graeme Stuart, his business candidate for mayor; Frank O. Lowden (a candidate this year for governor), Edwin Burritt Smith, and others. Mr. Smith says Lorimer—a Congressman, mind you, not a state legislator—opened the discussion by asking "What do you want?" Lorimer declared that the Mueller Bill was dead, and he offered as a substitute a bill to be called the Lindley Bill. That the official representatives of Chicago rejected; "it bore unmistakable signs," Mr. Smith says, "of tender regard for the traction interests." Lorimer accepted some amendments, proposed others himself, and when these failed to satisfy the friends of the city, the boss, a leader of the Republican party in Illinois, said the Lindley Bill was all Chicago would get. "You must accept it with these amendments, pull down all opposition in the House and from the Chicago press, and actively support the bill. It is the Lindley Bill or nothing."

The Defeat of the Republican Bosses

The Chicago press had been telling the city and state all about the situation, and, with the Allen Bill episode in mind, the organization legislators were anxious and weak. Chicago decided to reject the Lindley substitute and to fight its own boss on the floor of the House. With Sherman's "Fighting Forty" and the Democrats who were willing to help they had the votes, and all that they needed was a roll-call. But the Speaker, asked if he would allow one, refused to say. For two days there were skirmishes, and the voting showed that the "organization" was in a precarious condition, but at last the Speaker rose, pale, but with gavel in hand, to force the amendments to the Lindley Bill. Back of him were some women; beside and before him stood a score of strong men ready to defend him. The bill was called up, and Mr. Lindley offered Lorimer's Amendment Number One. The law required a roll-call upon a demand of five members. Ninety-six rose and shouted "Roll-call!" The Speaker would not hear; he put the amendment and, amid confusion and outcries, swung down his gavel and declared the amendment carried. Amid great excitement Amendment Number Two was offered; members cried "Roll-call! Roll-call!" But again the gavel fell and the second amendment was "carried," and so, with the storm waxing, Numbers Three, Four, Five, Six were hammered through. But at the sixth the House broke and there was a rush for the Speaker's chair. If it hadn't been for the women back of him, missiles would have been showered upon him; as it was the wave of angry members rose up to the chair and the Speaker fled through a back door.

Balked, the House paused a moment; then Representative Sherman whispered something to a friendly representative who called the House to order. The House reorganized with Representative Charles A. Allen as temporary Speaker, a roll-call showed a quorum present, and the Lindley Bill was moved for reconsideration. One by one, on roll-call, the amendments, Numbers Six, Five, Four, etc., were rejected in reverse order, the bill was laid on the table, and the Mueller Bill was substituted for it. Then a scathing resolution of censure was passed upon the fugitive Speaker and the House adjourned. He was in conference with Governor Yates, Lorimer, and Hinman, and when he returned to his seat that afternoon, he took his censure and excused himself by making charges of attempts to bribe him, which were investigated and found to be unfounded. After the investigation the Mueller traction bill was finally passed and Governor Yates signed it. He wrote a memorandum giving reasons why the bill should not become a law, but he made it a law.

Boodle a Democratic Issue in Missouri

Now for the Missouri-Illinois parallel. When Mr. Folk realized that the political corruption of St. Louis was but a part of the financial-political state system, which has supplanted a representative democracy with an oligarchy of criminals, he started what he has called a counter revolution. He saw, moreover, that his party, controlled by boodlers, was the organization of this treason. The Democratic party represented not democracy, but the enemies of democracy. What did he do? Because he was a Democrat, he appealed first to the Democrats of Missouri, because they were Democrats, to clear out first of all the Democratic boodlers because they were Democrats. That was putting party loyalty to a pretty severe test. What happened? Such a splendid exhibition of genuine patriotism as this country seldom has a chance to display. The Democrats of Missouri rose up and they smashed that rotten old machine all to pieces; they took back the control of their party and they are making it fit for any American citizen to support. And the good citizens of Missouri will be asked to support it, for, incidentally, the Democrats insured the nomination of Mr. Folk for governor. He will make his campaign on the same issue, "Boodle," and since the Republican party also boodled, he will ask all men of all parties to let him organize an administration that will represent, not bribery, but all the men of Missouri.

Boodle a Republican Issue in Illinois

The issue was not made so clear, nor so personal, nor so exciting in Illinois, but Illinois seems to be more intelligent politically than Missouri, less partizan, and boodle was the issue there this summer. Chicago realized after its eight years of war that the existing political system misrepresented the people in both city and state government, and that the Republican party, the dominant one, was the party to try first to clean up. In it the worst traitors to the people were the Lorimer-Jamieson group. The Chicago reformers asked the Republicans of Cook County and of Illinois to take away from them the control of the party and restore it to Republicans who would represent the common interest of all the people of the state. The Chicago *Daily News*, *The Tribune* and *The Record-Herald*, the trusted newspapers that express public opinion in Chicago and (therefore, I think) wield that "power of the press" which so many journalists elsewhere are bemoaning the loss of, voiced a demand to have Charles S. Deneen nominated for governor.

Deneen the Folk of Chicago

Deneen is a Cook County Republican leader, a politician, who associated for years with Lorimer and Jamieson. Chicago is not afraid of politicians. All the city's best reform efforts have been directed, not to put reformers in office, but rather to force the politicians to represent the people, and the "newspaper trust" and the Voters' Leagues are developing a class of politicians, not always sincere, who recognize that public opinion is a constant force in politics. Deneen is an honest man; I never heard his integrity questioned. He has been State's Attorney since 1896, and his record is one of orderly, efficient, fearless, and aggressively honest service. He did not go forth, like Folk, seeking out corruption in all places, but he performed the duties that came to him with tireless, masterful energy, and there is a line of cells in one state prison so full of business men whom Deneen convicted, that it is called Bankers' Row. Deneen is a remarkable man. But, for the sake of simplification, let us say only that he is a politician who believes that it is good politics to serve the public.

That is all Chicago requires, and that made the issue in the Republican party of Illinois this summer. Deneen ran on it. He wanted to be governor, but he understood that the men who supported him were seeking to beat the Lorimer-Jamieson ring, which believes that the Republican party exists to serve special interests. Lorimer and Jamieson understood this too. There were other candidates. Governor Yates, a shallow, pompous person, sought a second term, but he thought Yates was the issue. Then there was an eloquent young lawyer, Frank O. Lowden, son-in-law of George M. Pullman, who wants to be something prominent in politics, United States senator or governor. He is a "fine fellow" and he has more personal friends among the reformers and best citizens of Chicago than Deneen, but when he appeared as a candidate for the nomination, the old ring backed him, not all his friends. Mr. Lowden is a "safe man"; he is the type that "fools" most good citizens. Having a "laudable ambition," he seeks an office, not an issue, and he cannot understand why he should not "welcome the support of his party"; and when he achieves office he cannot understand why he should not support his party. The Lowdens are the kind of men political bosses put up when the ring is on the verge of a defeat and, being "good men," they cloud issues and save the rings. They do not mislead Chicago. That city saw through him to the ring behind, and the Republicans of Cook County sent to the convention a large majority of delegates instructed for Deneen. Many of the delegates, and some of the ward leaders, were reluctant and hankered for their old boss, but Public Opinion held them to their instructions.

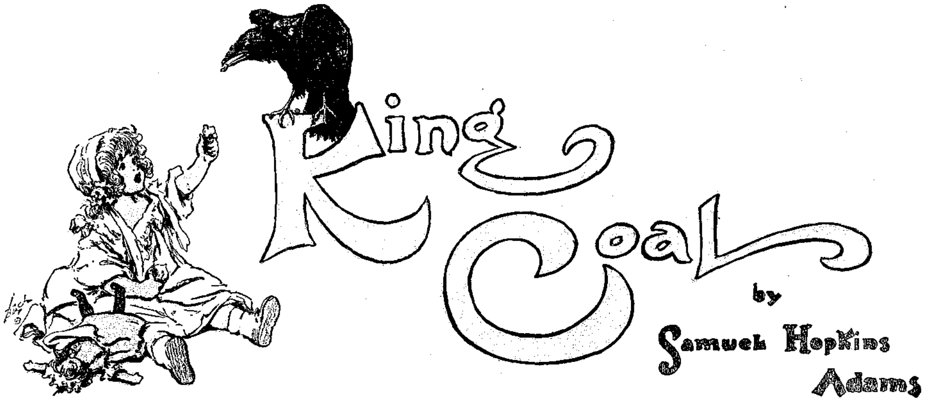
If Deneen, or, better still, if Chicago had made as careful a canvass of the country as Folk did of Missouri, I believe Illinois would have responded like Missouri. As it was, the Republicans of Illinois did not decide. The country districts followed their leaders and the nomination was left to the convention. There were six or seven candidates. Yates, with his patronage-built state organization; Lowden, with the old bosses, the special interests, and his money; and Deneen, with Cook County, the Chicago newspapers, and the best public opinion — these three led in strength, and a deadlock ensued which, for duration, was unprecedented in the state.

Federal Branch of the System

The efforts to break it developed the apex of the system. I said a while ago that the United States Government was a part of the state and municipal systems of Illinois and Chicago. Speaker Cannon, of the National House of Representatives, was chairman of the convention, and United States Senators Cullom and Hopkins were present also. These men—the whole "Federal Bunch," as they are called—"worked" for Lowden. Not that they cared especially for him, though one of them remarked that it was well to have "a governor with a barrel." But their influence was for "harmony," the "good of the party," not of the state, nor even of the Republican citizens of the state—but of the old party leaders and "the thing as it was." Well, they did help to break the deadlock. Chicago and Illinois resent federal interference. When this spring the Municipal League made its successful fight to beat "Doc" Jamieson in that boss's own ward, Congressman Lorimer and Senators Cullom and Hopkins persuaded President Roosevelt to appoint Jamieson Naval Officer of the Port. Upon their advice, confirmed, as he said, by such "respectable business men as John M. Smyth," etc., the President gave the discredited boss the office and the moral and political support that went with it. William Kent says that that helped to defeat Jamieson. So, at the convention, the Chicago newspapers, talking always of the old ring, were able to point out that the National Government was back of Lowden and his backers. This crystallized public opinion. The convention took a recess for ten days. When it reconvened, though the deadlock held for two days more, the current of sentiment was toward Deneen; and Yates, to get even with the ring that had used, then dropped him, directed his delegates to vote for Deneen.

What the Republicans Decided to Represent

There was a "deal" between Yates and Deneen. But the terms were honorable, and besides, "political deals" are, like politicians, not bad in themselves. They are bad when they trade the public interest off for special and personal interests, and the deal which carried out the wishes of the best public opinion in Illinois and made Charles S. Deneen the Republican candidate for Governor (and Lawrence Y. Sherman, the candidate for Lieutenant-Governor), did for the Republican party of Illinois, what the Democratic voters of Missouri did for the Democratic party, when they sent up delegates instructed for Folk—restored the control to the people of the party. That deal completed the political ruin of the Lorimer-Jamieson ring, and, I verily believe, begins a movement to carry on out into the state the reform which was begun eight years ago in Chicago—a reform which aims to make the government, municipal and state, represent, not bribers, not corrupt politicians, not corrupting business men, but the common interests of the state—the citizens and friends, not the enemies, of the republic.



King Coal

by Samuel Hopkins Adams

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD BIRCH

IF ever monarch made inauspicious entry into his own, it was King Coal on his arrival at the Zoo. He came on the wings of a storm hardly less black than himself. So black was it, indeed, that our entire population, from thickest fur to smallest feather, went into one of those strange frenzies to which the caged creatures of the wild are peculiarly susceptible upon any abnormal aspect of nature. Worst of all was Xanthippe, the great puma. Xanthippe was both a shrew and a coward, and the particular terror of her life was thunder. That is why Rend and I both happened to be in the large Animal House at the same time. We were trying to persuade Xanthippe—with pike-poles—that, in the interests of her particularly fine teeth, it were better that she should not gnaw the half-inch iron bars of her cage in two. While we were thus engaged something went plop! against the broad glass window.

Men who spend much time with wild animals acquire something of their sensitiveness to unusual sounds. Only a very small part, it is true, to be reckoned in terms of thousandths, but still enough to make them move more swiftly and instinctively than the ordinary human. Rend and I made a brief perpendicular flight (soothing an enraged lady is notoriously nervous work, and especially when the lady chances to be a puma) and came down with our pike-poles addressing the quarter whence came the noise. Nothing happened. I walked over to the window and peered out. On the gravel lay a little, dripping rag of rubber-coat. At the cost of a wetting I retrieved and brought it inside, where it immediately developed claws and a beak, both very limp.

"This is your department," said I, handing it over to Rend. He is curator of the aviary and recognized boss of all that fly or stalk therein, except the egrets, who, upon the occasion of his entering the flying-cage with a scarlet golf-coat on, chased him forth with sharp beaks and loud imprecations, and have since treated him with contemptuous tolerance—when he is dressed like a Christian.

"Young crow," said Rend, after a glance. "Dead," he announced, holding up the rag by one corner, which chanced to be a wing. "*Corvus americanus*," he added scientifically. "*Habitat, North*——"

"Wark!" said the rag, sampled Rend's thumb, didn't care for it, shifted to his little finger, and froze to it.

"Wow!" said Rend unscientifically, and the crow, far-flung, hit the wall and became once more a draggled rag.

The time was come for First Aid to the Injured. While Xanthippe tore the air to shreds and the rest of the beasts furnished chorus, Rend and I professionally bandaged the patient. In five minutes he had come to. He then proceeded to address us in highly unparliamentary crow-talk. It seemed that he didn't like his splint. Nothing would do but that he should get down and walk. He would fare forth from that place of gratuitous indignities. If restrained, he would bite fingers.

"Let him try, if he thinks he can walk," said Rend.

He tried. For three steps he sidled; then he toppled over. Up again and at it with unimpaired dignity. It's astonishing and admirable how dignified a crow can be under the most adverse circumstances. The second fall was almost a complete somersault. Rend and I roared. Xanthippe roared us one better—and made an enemy for life thereby. The poor bedeviled bird spread his free wing, whirled like a moribund pinwheel, and subsided. He turned on his back and lay still, his pathetic feet stuck straight up in the air in the attitude of one who finds this world a hollow sham, unworthy his continued patronage.

Rend grasped the projecting claws and lugged him away to a padded cell.

"He'll do," was the later verdict, "if he doesn't burst a blood-vessel from indignation."

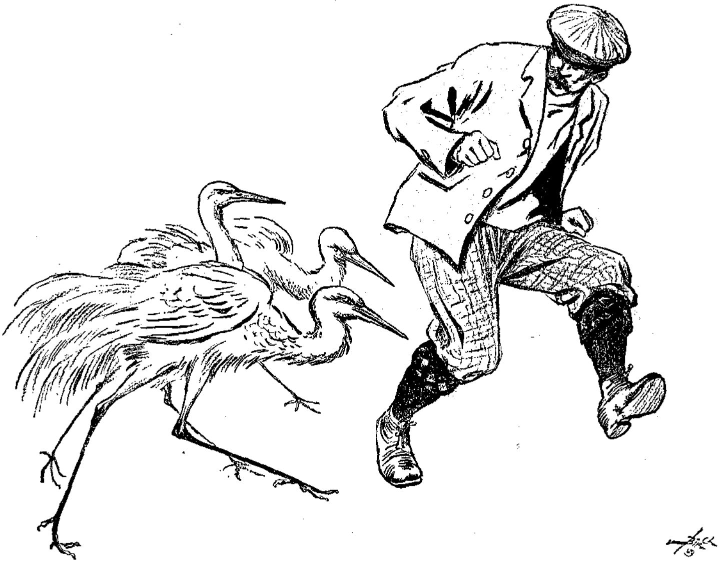
Within a fortnight the quondam rag was an established "trusty," with the freedom of the grounds. Except for his broken wing, which never mended so that he could fly, he was as good as new. King Coal, we called him, rather from his color than from any resemblance to the monarch of Mother Goose legend. That worthy, it will be remembered, was a merry old soul, whereas our crow was a crabbed fellow, grumbling of speech, and with the expression and manner of a dyspeptic. "Your Royal Nibs" was his nickname among us who knew him well, and he would answer to it with most unkindly language. But for one thing he might have fooled us almost to the last into thinking him what his harsh exterior indicated. The saving clause was that all the animals liked him, and he was received in the grizzly bears' cage with the same welcome which the polite seals extended to him on their rocks.

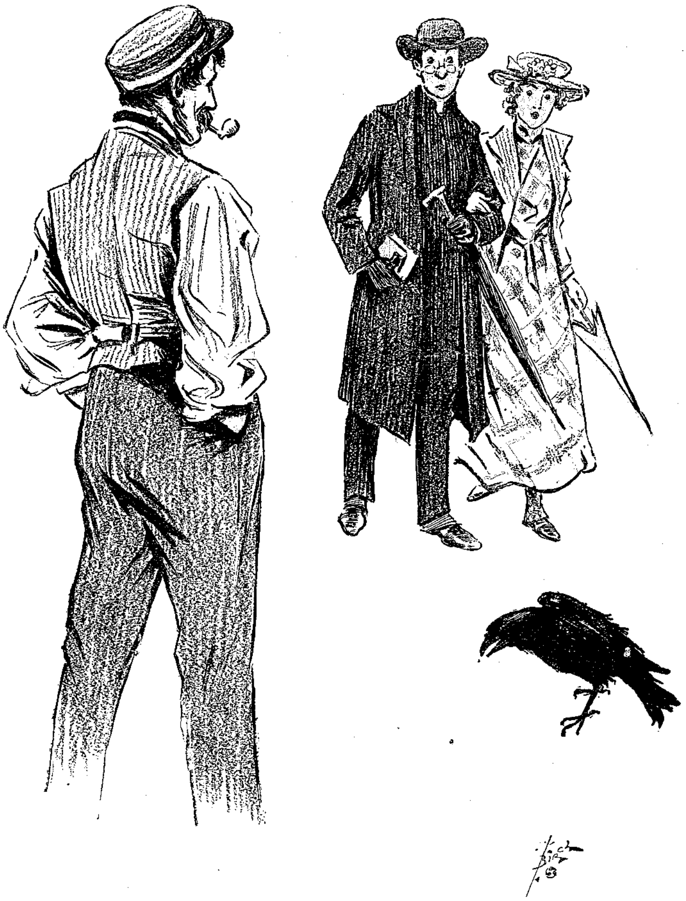
All the animals, I said. I must except Xanthippe. Between them was enmity from the first. Never did King Coal lose opportunity to sneak into the forbidden ground of the Animal House and tease the puma. Squatted on the floor he would address her in an indescribably nagging accent.

"Wark-wark-wark! Wark-wark-wark!" he would repeat, in maddening iteration, until the great cat shook the building with her rage.

Or, if she pretended not to notice, King Coal, who had become an expert climber, would make his way to the top of the cage, beak-laden with rubbish, and drop his burden on the glossy fur. There are few neater animals than a puma; none vainer; and such was Xanthippe's frenzy that we feared she might "go bad" under the persecution—i.e., fall a victim to a species of feline insanity which often ends in self-destruction. So Rend gave King Coal a lecture and put him in the flying-cage. His career nearly ended right there, for, waiting only for the curator's back to be turned, he said something impertinent to the largest egret, who not only tore most of the feathers off his back but put an

"chased him forth with sharp beaks and loud imprecations"





"*he appointed himself special guard of the lawn*"

ugly hole in Rend's leg when he went to the rescue of his Royal Nibs.

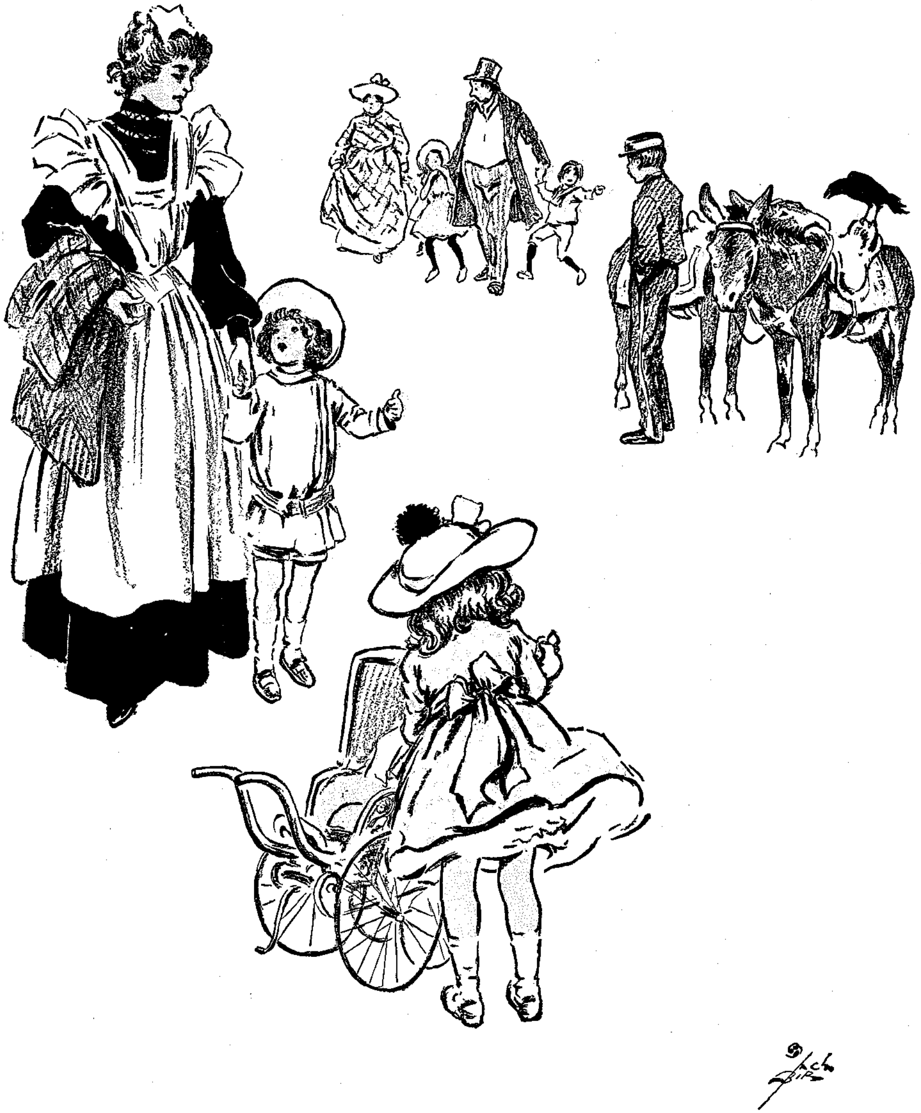
Even that experience served not to discipline the regal spirit. Two days later he was caught—Xanthippe's yells giving information—in the Animal House, and I chastised him with a string whip scientifically laid about his legs. Thereafter he was more cautious.

It was about this time that he appointed himself special guard of the lawn. This gave him little time for puma-baiting in open hours. His special province was the grass-plot in front of the Reptile House, where the walks are forbiddingly bounded by wires, and the keep-off-the-grass sign flourisheth as the green bay tree. Small children who strayed upon the inviting green were his particular care. Them he would shoo back to the walks with flapping wings and squawks of stern reproof. Further than the edge he never pursued. But woe to that trespasser whom his flip-flap gait overtook. For his bill was sharp and ready, and the screams of terrified infancy did not save terrified infancy's legs from the onslaught. To this day the Zoo authorities preserve in melancholy memento a communication from an indignant parent demanding King Coal's abolition on a charge of "savage decaption of my daughter's aged-4 right limb."

Some of the older children got up a game with King Coal. It was the old pastime of

"*I was on King's land,*
King wasn't home;"

with this special feature, that King Coal was always "it." He soon came to understand the game and, despite manifest temptations, always played fair, and never followed the fugitives upon the sidewalk, which was "own land" and therefore sanctuary. Up and down the lawn he would prance, eye keen for



"an established 'trusty,' with the freedom of the grounds"

a trespasser, and voice uplifted in the croaking challenge. The children mimicked it:

"*Get on the walk-walk-walk!*
None o' your talk-talk-talk!
Keep off my lawn; G'wan! G'wan!
Get up and walk-walk-walk!"

Presently a temerarious youngster would venture out under the far end of the wire. The royal eye would apparently take no note. Step by step the intruder would encroach. "Look out, Willy! He's onto you!" Back the little fellow would scurry. Then the "Qr-r-rark!" derisive from King Coal and jeers from the others would send the darer back. A step further, another, another; then a black streak flurrying swiftly to intercept; hippety-hop-skip, beat-of-the-wing jump, flop. That was the manner of his Royal Nibs's progress—a disordered pentameter, Rend described it. But it covered ground fast, and too often the shrieks of the wounded Willy, perforated as to his stocking, mingled with the "wark" of triumph from royalty's ensanguined beak.

To King Coal's land there came one hot noon a roly-poly baby girl of three-and-a-half. King Coal cast a wistful eye at her fat, bare legs as she toddled along the walk in the wake of her nurse. Then he dozed, for business was dull. The other children had gone to dinner. Soft footsteps roused him, startled him. Well he knew the impact of the foot juvenile upon forbidden turf. Ruffling his feathers, he gave fair warning:

"Wark-wark-war-r-r-rk!"

Fat-legs looked around, dimpled, smiled, laughed aloud. She was pleased; no doubt about that. King Coal was dumfounded, scandalized, to tell the truth, at this contempt of his authority. Slowly, balefully he moved upon the intruder. She stretched out a chubby hand.

"'Parrow," she observed, with a trill of glee. "Come, nice 'parrow."

And "'parrow" came, fluff with indignation. Here was no game; this was lese-majesty, to be punished as such. Hippety-hop-skip, beat-of-the-wing jump, flop. Thus bore down King Coal upon the unterrified stranger. Yet at the final moment the intuition of her sex asserted itself. She sat down on her legs.

Here was perplexity, indeed, for his Royal Nibs. A trespasser with no available legs! This was distinctly not according to Hoyle. King Coal considered. He circled around and made a tentative jab with his bill.

"Go 'way, 'parrow," said Fat-legs. "Don' you bite me." And she smiled meltingly.

For the first time in his life King Coal was abashed. He withdrew a few shuffles and began to grumble to himself. Watching him out of the corner of her eye, Fat-legs produced from some mysterious repository the remains of a bun. She tasted it, smacked her lips, and addressed King Coal.

"Wanna bite of Chicky's bun, 'parrow?" and she held it out to him.

He looked about him nervously. Fortunately he didn't see Rend and me watching from the window. He took the bite and opened his bill for another.

"Piggy-pig," said Chicky reprovingly. "My bite, now."

King Coal edged up nearer. The baby patted his head. They finished the bun between them. Rend and I looked on with amazement, bordering upon stupefaction. Our crabbed, fussy, scolding, black man-eater of a crow to be thus involved in a romance, an idyl.

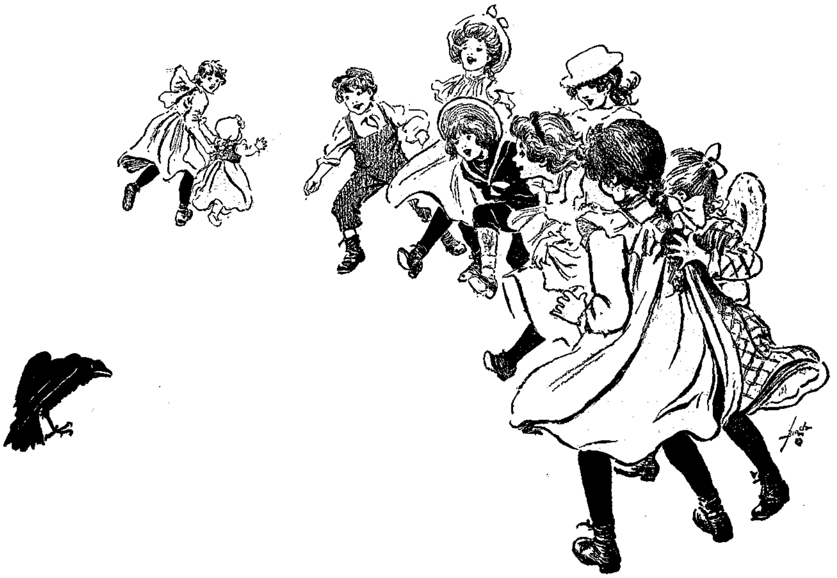
"D'you hear me, Miss Chicky! Come out o' that at once. Playin' with that dirty, old crow. The idea! Come out, I say!"

Discipline, in the shape of an energetic maid, appeared upon the scene. King Coal's feathers went up. He advanced, open-mouthed.

"Watch for doings," remarked Rend, delighted. "The King fights for his lady-love."

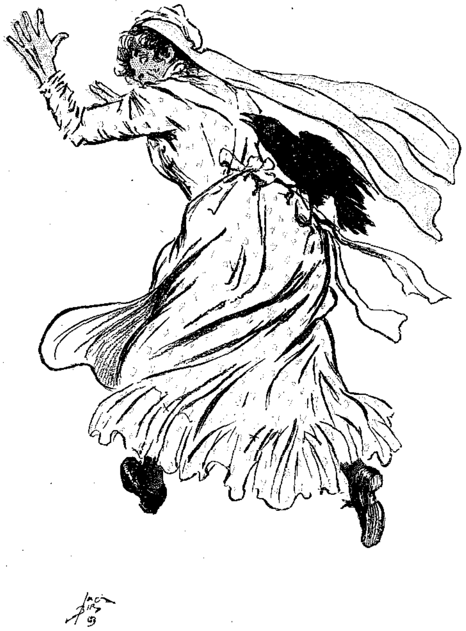
So it was. The nurse-girl aimed a futile and skirt-clogged kick at the King. Foolish nurse! In another second he was ascending her as the nimble sailor runs up the

"'*Get on the walk-walk-walk!*
None o' your talk-talk-talk!'"



shrouds. It was a weeping and hysterical female to whom we bore rescue and explanation, while Chicky and King Coal roamed, care-free, on the grass. Thereafter, Chicky and her royal friend had their romp every noon, and the nurse, although King Coal would never allow her so much as one foot on the grass, soon came to feel that she could safely leave her charge in the crow's care while she wandered about sight-seeing. But the game of "King's Land" had lost its savor for the Permanent It, and the other children complained bitterly of favoritism.

Though King Coal was softened, the spirit of mischief was by no means dead in the crow-soul. On a morning it rained and noon found no Chicky at the tryst. By an evil coincidence there was nobody in the Animal House. King Coal hippety-hop-flopped over to badger Xanthippe, the puma.



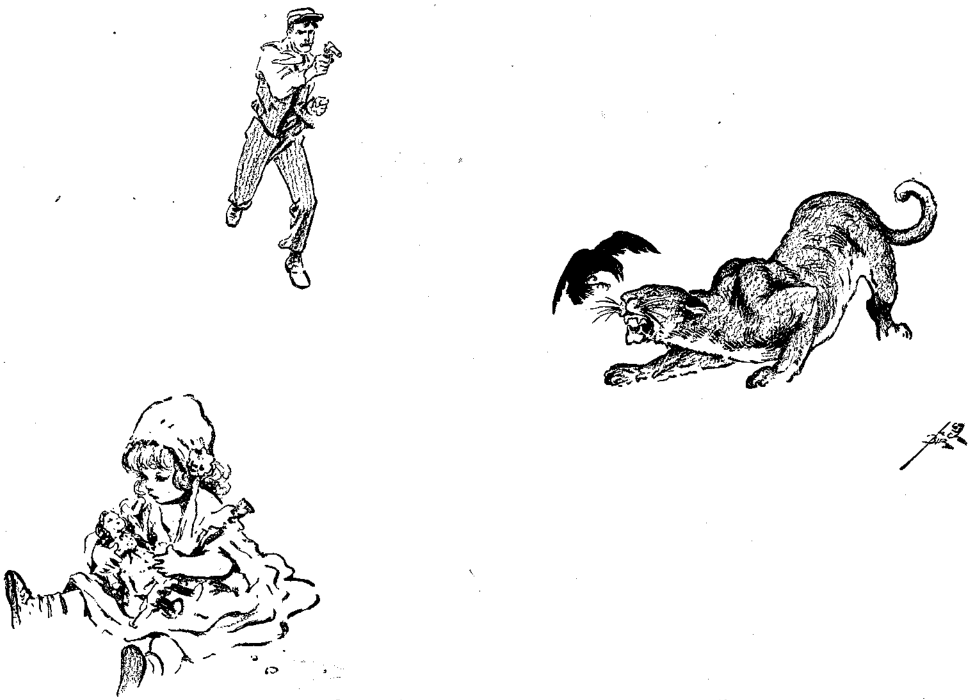
"he was ascending her as the nimble sailor runs up the shrouds"

She was in a smoldering rage that morning. Rain always roused the worst in her, and Xanthippe's worst was very bad indeed. At sight of her arch-enemy she fairly yelled with fury. King Coal squatted on the floor and poured out a long line of monotonous insults. Of course he was out-voiced by the tawny devil in the cage, but his was the steadier note, and in the breathing spaces of Xanthippe's clamor his contumelious "wark-wark-wark" incited her to fresh frenzy. In time his persistence overbore her and she sulked and gloomed dangerously in a corner of her cage. King Coal went over and bragged to the fat and lazy bob-cat. Then he returned and began to climb around Xanthippe's bars. Presently he found a resting place on the cage door. Here was a little metal pin which clinked when moved by a skilful beak. In the twitching of Xanthippe's ears the badgerer read fresh exasperation. He went at it harder. "Clink, clink, clink," sounded the metal. The furred ears stopped twitching. Under the sleek coat the great muscles rippled and set. Watch close, King Coal. There is preparation in that quiet. The splendid eyes blinked. The tufted tail straightened and stiffened. Take care, Imp of Mischief. It is the danger signal.

"Clink, clink, clink." His Royal Nibs is making his music. He opens his beak to add vocal to instrumental—and a strangled squawk of terror comes forth. For, with a rustle and snarl a streak of tawny murderousness flashes through the air straight at him.

"War-r-rk!" he screams, and lets go all. It is a hard fall to the floor. But better that than those simitar claws, rattling on the cross-bar; those slavering fangs, closed on the grating that was his perch one short second ago. Sorely and stiffly the crow picks himself up and hobbles out of the building. He does not notice that the little pin, lifted too far by his beak, dangles at the end of its chain; that the bar has slipped from its place. And, a few moments later, when, under the pressure of straining claws, the grating slips aside and a lithe body crawls out and drops to the floor on padded feet, there is no one there to see. No one but the bob-cat and he is too fat and lazy to care.

Once outside the crow recovered his spirits at the sound of Chicky's voice calling him to come and play. The shower was past. He ambled over and was scolded for being late to the royal game of Treasure-House. This was an invention of Chicky's. She was treasurer, with the under side of a little bush for her domain, and thither King Coal must bring whatever booty he could set beak to. Once, I remember, there was disruption because it was a dead garter snake. King Coal was inordinately proud of it as a rare and precious trove, until his little friend rose, shrieking, and refused to play any more that day.



"Straight at the great snarling cat-head he flew"

On this occasion, however, the game was progressing finely. From my window in the Reptile House I could see two buttons, a piece of red yarn, and a peanut (this last pilfered from the grizzlies) laid by his Royal Nibs at the feet of his queen. In the small pavilion Rend was trying to attract King Coal's attention to a bit of disguised red pepper. Those two were always playing practical jokes on each other. But the crow paid no attention to Rend. He was acting in a peculiar manner. He had left Chicky and was making, at the top of his ridiculous gait, for a point in the shrubbery beyond which I could not see.

"Wark-wark-wark; wark-wark-wark!" he shrieked, and there was unmistakable terror in the cry.

Yet it was obvious that he was not running *away* from anything, but rather toward the object of his fear. It flashed over my mind that one of the snakes might have escaped and might be charming the bird. As straight as his infirmities would permit King Coal made for the thick curtain of the bushes. Suddenly the curtain parted, and a long, fulvous body glided out. My heart sickened within me, for there was murder in every line of the tense frame, the wrinkled face, the rigid tail of the savage puma. Chicky, all unconscious of the peril, was hardly ten yards from the great beast who crept toward her. I caught up a pike-pole and ran, though I knew my best speed must be too slow. Shouting to Rend I reached the open, too late to take any part, but in time to see.

The puma had not reckoned on the crow. She checked, disconcerted for the moment, as King Coal sounded his battle cry and hobbled forward. There was no terror now in the rusty squawk that we had so often found ridiculous. It was all defiance.

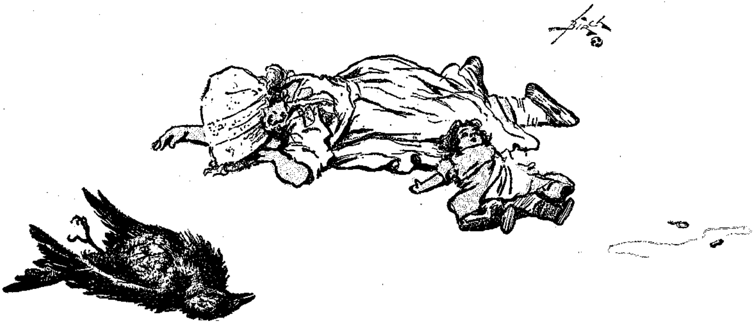
"Wark-wark-wark!" Can I ever forget the sound!

Straight at the great snarling cat-head he flew. The puma crouched. King Coal's wings slapped about her eyes; King Coal's sharp beak clipped the wrinkled nose. Then the mighty forepaws beat up and out, once and again. The impact was barely audible, but King Coal hurtled through the air and fell almost at the feet of Chicky. At the same moment I saw a flying figure, a puff of smoke, another, and the lithe puma-form collapsed, quivered, and lay still as Rend, revolver in hand, sped over the lawn.

"Thank God!" he gasped. "The first shot."

We leaned over the puma. "Quite dead," said Rend. "Through the brain, I think. Ah, but did you see King Coal?" His voice choked with pride.

We turned to look for our friend. A little, draggled, black rag lay on the lawn. Not all black; there was a splash of crimson on the breast. And beside the limp body a baby-girl hid her face in the grass and sobbed for her playmate.



THE HOUSE OF FULFILMENT

BY

GEORGE MADDEN MARTIN

AUTHOR OF "EMMY LOU: HER BOOK AND HEART"

PART II—CHAPTER VIII

IT seemed all at once as if some wilful perversity had seized Molly; at home she was so petulant Alexina dared not cross her, for to anger her was to make her cough; abroad she was gayer than any, almost to recklessness. Celeste, taciturn and secretive, kept herself between mother and daughter insistently, and often the door to Molly's room was locked until afternoon. Mrs. Garnier must not be disturbed, she said.

One of these times, a day in late July, Alexina went out to the Carringfords'. Emily knew of most of the comings and goings of Alexina and her mother, and in her heart probably was envious, though to Alexina she was concerned.

"That picnic of last week is being talked about," she remarked.

Alexina flushed, but she was honest. "It ought to be," she said. Gaiety can tread close upon the heels of recklessness. But if Molly went, the daughter had to go for this very reason, though she could not tell Emily this. So she spoke of other things. "Do you know anything of Uncle Austen?" she asked. "Is he still taking his meals down-town and sleeping at the house?"

Emily looked conscious. "Yes," she said; "I think he is."

Somehow Alexina felt that Emily not only knew but wanted it to be felt that she knew. Then why hesitate and say only that she thought so?

"How's Garrard?" Alexina asked suddenly. Garrard was young Dr. Ransome. Emily flushed a little but she answered, unconcernedly, "Well enough, I reckon."

On Alexina's return to the hotel, the clerk stopped her in the corridor, looking a little embarrassed under the clear, surprised gaze of the young lady. "It's about a little matter with Mrs. Garnier; it's been running two months now."

A moment after, as she went on blindly up the stairs, a folded paper in her hand, she understood; understood what Georgy had offered to share with her, what the taciturn secretiveness of Celeste meant. She went in through the parlor to her mother's room, from which of late she had been so much shut out.

"Molly," she said, her voice sounding strange to herself, as she held out the paper open.

Molly, risen on her pillow, looked at it, at her, her eyes growing big. She was frightened, and cowered a little, crumpling some letters in her lap. "Don't look at me like that, Malise," she said. "I've some of the money you gave me left—I'll help to pay it."

That she was afraid only because of the bill!

"Oh—" Alexina breathed it rather than uttered it.

Molly, risen from her elbow to sitting posture, was looking at her with big, miserable eyes, her throat, so slight and pretty, swelling with the sobs coming.

But the other came first, and with it came the terror. "Malise, Malise, hold me; hold me. I'm afraid!"

Celeste was out.

Alexina, holding her mother, could reach the bell, and rang it, again, and again. "Oh," she said to the boy when he came; "get a doctor."

"What one?" he asked.

Alexina remembered Dr. Ransome.

Then she sat and fed ice to Molly and tried to keep her still. It is a fearful thing to feel the close, clinging touch of a person we are shrinking from. It was a hot, drowsy afternoon. The clock on the parlor mantel ticked with maddening reiteration. It seemed hours before Dr. Ransome came. Then a moment later Celeste returned. Molly flung her arms out to the old woman.

"He's dead, mammy," she wailed; "Jean's dead; the letters came after you went—and I'm afraid, I'm afraid of it; I'm afraid to die!"

It was to Celeste Molly had to tell it. The daughter listened with remorse, and a sudden resentment toward Celeste, too.

Molly was not going to be better right at once, and Alexina and Dr. Garrard Ransome had many opportunities for talk. She stopped him in the parlor, as he was going, one morning. It had been on her mind for a long time to ask him something. "It's odd, your name being Ransome," she said. "Mrs. Leroy, who used to live where you do, had been a Miss Ransome."

"She's my Cousin Charlotte," said the young fellow; "that's how my mother came to fancy living where we do, when we came down from Woodford to Louisville. She used to visit the Leroys there, you see."

"Really?" said Alexina. "They were very good to me."

The blue eyes of the doctor were regarding her intently, but as if thought were concentrated elsewhere. "I wonder if it was you Cousin Charlotte meant? I was down there two winters ago, for a month. They live in Florida, at a place called Aden."

"Yes," said Alexina; "Aden."

"And she asked me about some young girl who, she said, lived across from the cottage. Of course I didn't know."

"I wasn't there then," said Alexina; "I was at school. They were good to me; are they well—and happy?" The eagerness was good to see, o dejected had the girl seemed of late.

"Well—yes—or were when mother last heard. Happy too, I reckon, as it's counted with us poor families used to better things."

"Tell me about them, if you don't mind? They were the best friends I ever had."

"Well," he said, looking rather helpless in the undertaking, "there isn't much to tell. They're getting along. The Captain was bookkeeper for a steamboat line down there, went home every week, but, somehow, a year ago, they dropped him; he's getting old, the Captain is."

"Yes, he must be, the Captain. And Mrs. Leroy?"

"Cousin Charlotte? Well, she's Cousin Charlotte. Some ways she's a real child about things and mighty helpless when it comes to managing. But she never thinks about repining, and it's funny how she'll do whatever King tells her."

"And he?"

"King? Oh, he's all right. Queer fellow though, some ways, imperturbable as a young owl. Best poker player down there, and that's saying something. It's motley, Aden is, like all those small towns since the railroad went through 'em."

The young man happened to glance at Miss Alexina, and saw he had said something wrong. He was the only child of his mother and so knew something of how ladies feel on certain subjects. Yet, on the other hand, Miss Alexina adored Major Rathbone, and the Major's poker record, while possibly of a more local character, was scarcely less celebrated than his guerrilla past. Still, ladies are expected to be inconsistent.

"I shouldn't have told that, I reckon," he remarked; "you all don't see these things as we do. He's a fine fellow, King is. He's a great shot, too," cheerfully; "I went on a week's hunt down in the glades with him. King's all right."

Maybe he was, but it sounded as though he were trifling. "Hasn't he a business?" she asked, with condemning brevity and an emphasis which spoke small opinion of him if he had not.

"I don't know about calling it a business," said William Leroy's cousin; "I know he's about the busiest. It's a big, old place, you know, the grove they own, and he's reclaiming it. There's just one subject he's discursive on and that's the best fertilizer for young orange trees."

Somehow William Leroy did not shine against this background as his well-intending cousin meant he should. "And they're poor, Mrs. Leroy and the Captain?" asked Miss Blair.

"Well," admitted Garrard, "they aren't rich."

The girl sat thinking. "I'm going down there," she said suddenly. "Is there a hotel? There is? Then I'm going to take Molly and go down to see them. There's something I want to tell Mrs. Leroy and the Captain."

"As good a place as any," agreed Dr. Garrard. "I told you at the start Mrs. Garnier must not try a winter here."

"We'll go," declared Alexina, then stopped. Maybe they would not be glad to see her. "But don't mention the possibility if you should be writing," she begged; "don't mention knowing me—please. I—I'd like to discover it all for myself."

After he had gone she went to the piano near the window and, looking out over the warehouse roofs to the river and softly fingering some little melody, sat thinking.

There was a tap, and Alexina turned on the piano stool as Emily Carringford came in. Somehow Emily, so prettily, daintily charming in her fresh white dress, made Alexina cross. She felt wilted and jaded, and who cared if she did? That her present state was brought about by her own choosing only made her crosser. What was it in Emily's manner? Had she grown more beautiful in a night?

She dropped into a chair and, holding her parasol by either end across her knee, looked over at Alexina on the stool, and, looking, laughed. It was a laugh made of embarrassment and complacency, half shy, half bold.

"Your Uncle Austen asked me last night to marry him," she said.

"Emily—" Alexina sprang from the stool and stood with apprehension rushing to her face in rising color and dilated gaze. "Oh—Emily!"

Was it foreboding in her eyes as they swept Emily's girlish loveliness?

"He didn't seem to mind my being poor," said Emily; "he said it was my practical and praiseworthy way of going to work that made him first— Oh, Alexina," she colored and looked at the other, "he didn't even mind our little house—and mother doing the work."

A sort of rage against Emily seized Alexina. She stamped her foot.

"Oh," she cried, "why shouldn't he the rather go down on his unbending knees in gratitude that you'll even listen? You're twenty-one and he's fifty-one. You've everything, you're lovely. You've your voice, you haven't begun to live yet—oh, I know he's my uncle, and I remember all he's done for me, but I've known him years, Emily, *years*, and I've never seen Uncle Austen laugh—once."

What on earth has laughing to do with it? Alexina always was queer.

This from Emily. Not that she said it, except in a puzzled, uncomprehending stare at Alexina, the while she returned to what she had come to communicate. "We're going to be married the first day of October," she said; "Mr. Blair has to go East on some business then."

Alexina drew herself together with a laugh. What was the use—yet she could not divest herself of a responsibility.

She looked at Emily who was looking at her. Their eyes met. Alexina looked away.

"Emily," she said, "there's something," it took effort to say it, "something maybe you haven't thought of. It came to Aunt Harriet, and it comes to everybody, I feel sure. Won't you be cutting yourself off from any right to it?" The red was waving up to Alexina's very hair.

Emily showed no resentment at this implication which both seemed to take for granted, but then she was not following Alexina very closely, her own thoughts being absorbing. "The wedding will have to be in our little house," she said, "so it won't make much difference about the dress; nobody'll be there, but for the rest, I'm going to have some clothes. I told mother and father and grandfather so this morning."

Alexina went over and seized the other's hands as children do. A softer feeling had come over her. Perhaps Emily was doing this thing to help her people. Besides, she and Emily had used to weave wonderful garbs in bygone days, for the wearing to the Prince's ball. To be sure, one had never pictured an Uncle Austen as the possible Prince, but still Emily should have them, if she wanted them.

Alexina's gaze fell upon a flower lying on the floor, which had dropped out of Garrard Ransome's buttonhole. The boy loved flowers as most men from the blue-grass country do, and the cottage yard was a wilderness of them. She had almost forgotten Garrard's share in this. She picked the flower up and handed it to Emily. "Dr. Ransome has been here," she said, feeling treacherous—for the other man, after all, was her uncle.

Emily took it, and laid it against the lace of her parasol, this way and that.

"I've always, as far back as I can remember, meant to be somebody, something," said Emily. She said it without emotion, as one states a fact. Then she rose and picked up her glove. "Sometimes I've thrown my arms out and felt I could scream, it all seemed so poor and crowded and hateful to me," which was large unburdening of self for Emily. Then she went. At the door she laid the flower on a chair.

The three weeks of Molly's illness brought it to the end of August and, as she convalesced, Alexina began to plan for Aden. In the midst of her preparations the Major and Harriet returned.

She went out to the house the morning of their arrival. The luggage was being unloaded at the curb as she reached the gate. Hearing voices as she stepped on the porch, Alexina looked in at the parlor window. Harriet, her hat yet on, was bending her head that little Stevie, urged by his mother, might kiss her. The baby was no shyer about it than the woman, yet the woman smiled as the baby's lips touched her face.

As she rose she saw Alexina and came to the door to meet her. She kissed the girl almost with embarrassment, yet kept hold of her hands, and suddenly her eyes filled with something she tried to laugh away.

"I had your letter," she was saying, "and resent it, too, that you are going, and so does Stephen." Her face changed, her voice grew hesitant, hurried. "He's never going to be better than now"—was it a sob?—"but since I may have him, may keep him, and he is willing now to live so for me, though not at first, not at first— Oh, Alexina, it has been bitter!"

Alexina followed her into the parlor. The Major was there in a wheeled chair, the babies afar off, refusing to obey the maternal pokes and pushes to go to him, and regarding him and his wheeled affair with furtive, wide-eyed suspicion. The eyes of the Major were full of the humor of it.

"Now had I been a gamboling satyr on hoofs they would have accepted me at once," he assured Alexina; "it's this mingling of the familiar with the unnatural——"

He was holding the girl's hand while he spoke and looking up keenly at the pretty, tired face. There had been enough in her letters for them to have divined something of her trouble.

"To some it comes early, to others late, Alexina," he said quite gently. He had noted the signs—the violet shadows beneath the baffled young eyes, the hint of the tragedy in their depths.

Alexina sat down suddenly and, leaning her face on the arm of the wheeled chair, began to cry. Not that she meant to do it at all.

Time was when Harriet would have been at a loss, even now she was embarrassed, though she hovered over the girl, anxious and solicitous, and even touched the pretty wavy hair with her hand.

"Let her alone, let her cry it out," said the Major.

Alexina, groping for his hand, held to it like a very child and cried on.

PART III

"Joy will be part of the Kingdom of God."
—RENAN.

CHAPTER I

Immediately after the wedding Alexina and Molly went South. Molly turned petulant at sight of Aden and Alexina could not blame her; indeed, she and Celeste were of a mind with her as they drove from the station to the hotel. The horses ploughed through loose, grayish sand, the sidewalks along the street, ostensibly the business thoroughfares, were of board, not in the best of repair, and the sky-line of the street was varied according as the frame stores had or did not have a sham front simulating a second story. Men sat on tilted chairs beneath awnings along the way and stared at the occupants of the carriage as it passed. It was mid-afternoon, which, in Aden, seemed to be a glaring, shadeless hour and, but for these occasional somnolent starers, a deserted one. Yet people lived here, existed, spent their lives in this crude, poor hideousness, this mean newness; the Leroys lived here! And that their son would let them, would remain himself!

"What did we come for anyhow?" queried Molly. "The world is full of charming places. You do adopt the queerest notions, Malise."

Malise sat convicted. It had sounded so alluring—so suggestive of charm and languor; the very name of Aden had breathed a sort of magic. And she had come, too, buoyed up by a large and epic idea of restitution. How foolish, how young, how almost insulting from the Leroys' standpoint it suddenly seemed.

"We spent two winters in Italy, Jean and I, and one in Algiers," Molly was saying reflectively. "Heavens, Malise, they're building that house on stilts, right over a sink hole of tin cans."

For the matter of that there were tin cans everywhere; it was most depressing.

"Even Louisville was better than this," said Molly grudgingly; "don't look so resigned, Malise; it's not becoming."

They turned a corner and the driver stopped before a long two-storied building, painted white, which proved to be the hotel. It stood up from the street on wooden posts, the space between latticed. A railed gallery ran across the front and steps ascended midway of its length. Two giant live-oaks flanked the building either end, the wooden sidewalk cut out to encircle their great roots, and, while hand-bills and placards were tacked up and down the rugged, seamy trunks, yet gray moss dropped from the branches and swept the gallery posts. The building looked roomy, old-fashioned and reposeful, and Alexina's spirits rose. She gathered up the wraps, Celeste the satchels—no one ever looked to Molly to gather up anything—and they went in.

The place seemed deserted and asleep, but just inside the doorway, where the hall broadened into an office, a man stood looking through a pile of newspapers. His clothes were black and his vest clerical; below its edge hung a small gold cross; he turned politely, then said he would go and find some one.

"Dear me," said Molly, brightening, "he's handsome."

Two days after they were settled in comfortable rooms overlooking the hotel grounds. A slope down to a small lake boasted some gnarled old live-oaks and pines, and one side was set out with a young orange grove. Across the lake one could see several more or less pretentious new houses built around the shore. The breeze tasted of pine and Molly had slept a night through without coughing.

"But, Heavens!" she complained, the second afternoon, lolling back in a wooden arm-chair on the hotel gallery; "isn't there anything to do?"

Alexina and the young man in clerical garb were her audience. He was the Reverend Harrison Henderson and had charge of the Episcopal Church of Aden and lived at the hotel. He seemed a definite and earnest man. His blond profile was strong. It was a rather immobile face perhaps, but it lighted with very evident pleasure as he answered Mrs. Garnier.

"How would you like to drive out to Nancy?" he proposed; "it's quite an affair for a lake down here. There's a young fellow there who rents sail-boats."

"Charming," agreed Molly, sitting up; "you have ideas; you can't have been here long."

Mr. Harrison smiled, though it was an acknowledging rather than a mirthful smile. Life is too earnest for mere laughter, but his zeal to serve Mrs. Garnier was not to be doubted.

"What do you say, Miss Blair?" he asked, turning to that young person.

"Who—I?" Alexina had been leaning forward with her elbow on the gallery railing, her eyes looking off to a line of pines against the sky, wondering how she could find out about the Leroys, and if she really wanted to. She came back to the veranda and the present. "I think it would be charming, too," she replied.

"Then we'll go right away, so as to see the sunset," he said, and rose; "you will need wraps for Mrs. Garnier." Somehow a man never thinks the other woman will need anything.

He spoke briskly and went off down the plank sidewalk toward town with a swing, for the day was fair, the air soft, and the blood in the Reverend Henderson, despite the dogmatic taint in it, was red and young.

Out at Lake Nancy Osceola, a young fellow in flannel shirt, knickerbockers, and canvas shoes, was scanning the shore from a wooden pier which ran out the extent of shallow water, having just made fast the sail-boat rising and falling with the swell at the pier's end.

A grove of well grown orange trees stretched up the slope from the water, the trees heavy with fruit and looking sturdy and well cared for. To the right stood the frame packing sheds, and beyond, amid higher foliage against the cerulean sky, showed a house roof.

But the young fellow on the pier was gazing in the other direction, where, through the straight vistas of the grove, a carriage was being driven under the trees, the top sweeping the fruit-laden branches, then he hallooed as he started in the pier, but a negro man digging among the trees had dropped his spade and was running up. The carriage stopped and the young minister of the Aden Episcopal Church got out. Naturally, it was to be supposed, it was some person with no more common sense.

But there were others than the Reverend Mr. Henderson descending—two ladies, some party from the hotel come for a sail, probably.

It was the duty of colored Pete to go with sailing parties, but there was work that he should finish this afternoon. The old darky was backing the horse. The minister and the ladies were approaching.

The young fellow was just in from a sail, having been down to the sedge land with his gun, but he would go again. He gave a call. "It's all right, Pete; go on with the ditching."

His eyes were indifferent as he watched them approach, though their glance was straight and clear and keen. Suddenly the look changed, intensified, and the young fellow's shoulders squared.

The minister led the way, talking with the pretty, slight woman who stopped with protest each step as her feet went down in sand. Behind them came a jaunty-looking young girl with light-footed carriage. The wind was ruffling and tossing her hair and she held to her hat as she stopped under the orange trees to look upon the prospect.

But the eyes watching her did not turn, knowing the scene on which she was gazing. It was Lake Nancy, long and lizard-like—its sapphire water shimmering beneath the breeze—stretching westward between curving, twisting, inletted shores, fringed near at hand with the bright green of young oranges and lemons and further on by the darker live-oak and pine, while on the opposite side the line of forest stretched heavy and somber, trailing gray moss hoariness into Nancy's lapping waves.

And while the girl gazed on Nancy the young man watched her with a curious intentness but with no doubt. Then he walked in the length of the pier to meet them, and as the girl's eyes came around to him she changed to a startled pallor, white as her serge gown, and her eyes dilated, then into them came eagerness.

Except for a tightening pull on muscles about nose and mouth the young fellow stood impassive.

The color rushed back into the girl's face. The young man had turned and was shaking hands with Mr. Henderson who was mentioning names, but the girl had her back to them and was studying the outstretch: her head was high.

When she turned again Mr. Henderson was carefully piloting the other lady into the boat. "Malise," that lady was calling. Malise, forced by this to come and be helped in, found herself in the stern. But her throat, because of a choked-back sob, hurt, and a vast homesickness and sense of futility was upon her.

When presently she could look up and around, the little craft was skimming out across the lake to deep water where it shifted and flew westward into the dying afternoon.

There were billowy puffs of clouds high above, softly flushing into rose with a golden fleeciness to their edges. Her mother's talk and dulcet-toned laughter reached the girl, punctuated with the serious accents of Mr. Henderson. The two were sitting where the seats, running about, came together at the bow, and he, with an elbow on the rail, was looking at Molly. Such a wistful, pretty child she looked in her white canvas dress, with her wind-blown, gauzy veil fluttering from her hat.

Alexina's eyes were fixed on them, but she was conscious, too, of a gaze on her, which for all her hot pride and hurt she could not look around and meet. Once, when the sail was shifting and she knew the eyes would, perforce, be concerned therewith, she stole a hurried survey and saw a well-knit figure, quick in its movements, the muscles playing beneath the flannel shirt. A discarded coat was upon the seat near her.

"Down, please," came in cool, deliberate tones from the owner of the coat and the gaze. The head of the girl went down, while the sail swung about. The boat dipped, righted, then flew ahead, following the curving shores of the lake.

The very air seemed flushing, the shimmering water had a thousand tints, the shores slipping by breathed out odors of mold and leaf and vine. The western sky was triumphing, clouds of purple and of crimson lifting one above another about a golden center, and they in the boat were speeding into the glory, the very rosiness of the air seemed stealing down upon them and enveloping them; the sense of avoirdupois, of gravitation, was lost; one felt winged, uplifted, it was good all at once, it was good to live, to be.

The eyes and the gaze were on her again, she felt them and turned suddenly and faced them. The look she met was deep and warm, but it changed, holding hers, grew cool, enigmatical, impersonal. Did he not know her then, or did he not want to know her?

This time tears of hurt and pride rushed to her eyes. He was watching, but she could not get her eyes away, even with those hateful tears welling.

The sail shifted, for no reason apparently. "Down, please," he commanded. But as the boat dipped, shook itself, righted again, and flew on through the rosy light, his head came up near hers and his voice, in the old, boyish way, said:

"Really?"

Sudden light shone through the tears in the girl's eyes. Molly would have wrung her hands with an artist's anguish, this was the place for coquetry!

"I thought you didn't want to know me and I was hurt," said Alexina.

"It was yours to know first," said William Leroy stoutly, but his eyes were laughing.

"Oh," said Alexina doubtfully, "why, yes; perhaps it was," and then she laughed too, gaily.

CHAPTER II

As Molly, Alexina, and Mr. Henderson sat on the front gallery of the hotel the next morning, they were joined by one Mr. Thompson Jonas, a lawyer of Aden, who lived above his office and took his meals at the hotel.

Mr. Jonas was small, wiry, and muscular, of Georgia stock, with a fierce little air and a fierce mustache, and quick, bright blue eyes, never still. He had sprung to the aid of Molly and Alexina one morning, and flung a door open as they passed from the dining-room, and speedily they were all good friends.

It was characteristic of him that he should have flung the door back, not merely opened it. There was something of homage in the act. Within the body of the little man was the chivalrous spirit of a Chevalier Bayard, a Cœur de Lion. The big soul of Mr. Jonas was imprisoned in his pigmy person as the spirit of the genii in the casket.

Mr. Jonas was a Nimrod, and even now stood in hunting accoutrements, seeming rather to have been shaken into his natty leggings, than they to have been drawn onto him. There was a flare and dip to his wide soft hat and a jaunty fling to his knotted tie. His dog, a Gordon setter bitch, sat on her haunches by him as he stood, his fingers playing with her silky ears.

"Now, you'd better come go with me, Henderson," he was urging; "the buggy's here at the door. You need it—you need this sort of thing more."

"It's a busy day with me, thank you," answered the Reverend Henderson, a little coldly. For this Mr. Jonas was a man of no church. His faith, he had frequently assured the young clergyman, would long ago have died for breathing space in any creed he yet had met with.

"When you're older you'll understand better what I mean, my dear boy," the little man had in good part and cheerfulness assured the other; "come round and use my books any time you like."

For the soul of Mr. Jonas enthused—or convinced its owner that it did—over Confucius and further reveled in the belief that it delved in occult knowledge; it also led him to place the volumes of the early Fathers on his book-shelves and the literature of the Saints and of Kant and Comte and Swedenborg; it conducted its owner to the feet of Emerson and Thoreau; it made him talk Darwinism. Jesus Christ and Plato, Mr. Jonas loved to say, made up his ideal philosophy.

Mr. Henderson, on the other hand, spoke of church buildings in Aden other than his own as assemblying places. It was inevitable he did not give his approval to Mr. Jonas. His feeling against the little man even made him enumerate the occupations ahead for the day, as if it was a sort of avowal of the faith to thus declare them.

"It's a busy day with me, thank you. I have a feast day service and a guild meeting, besides my parochial duties and a vestry meeting for the evening."

"Dear me," said Molly, looking at him, "to be sure—I'd forgotten you're a minister."

The young man looked up, instant self-arraignment in his face for permitting it to be forgotten.

"When do you have service?" Molly was saying. "We must come over—Malise and I."

He told her gravely.

Mr. Jonas was standing against the gallery railing, rising and falling on his neat little toes, the setter's eyes following his every movement. He was facing Mrs. Garnier and her daughter, looking from the mother, with her red brown hair and shadowy lashes, to the girl, quite lovely also, when she smiled in this sweet, sudden way up at him. She had nice hair too, something the color of wild honey.

"Charming women, charming women;" he was summing them up; yet could Mr. Jonas have called to mind any women, the old or young, the forlorn or charming, who had not moved him to chivalric emotion in some form?

Alexina was looking up the street and as Mr. Jonas turned, a wagonette, drawn by two big iron-gray mules, swung around the corner, a glitter of brass and a hint of red about the harness. A young fellow on the front seat was driving; a lady sat behind.

"The finest boy and best shot in Jasmine County," said Mr. Jonas, starting forward as the mules were reined up at the hotel entrance, "and the foolishest, most profoundly wise mother."

Alexina was going forward too. "We—that is—I—know them," she told him; "they are old friends—the Leroys."

For she had known Charlotte in a moment.

A darky boy lounging about came to take the mules and King sprang his mother out, as lightly as ever a girl would spring, and brought her up the steps to Alexina.

Charlotte's embrace was eager and ardent; then she cried a little with her face against the girl's shoulder.

"For my youth," she said the next instant, lifting her head and smiling at the girl. "I'm almost a middle-aged woman, little Mab; I'm nearly forty-five and I don't want to be."

Vivacity, as of old, dwelt in Charlotte's face and animated her lively movements, but her brilliant eyes were somewhat sunken, as happens with women of marked features and dashing beauty; the skin was growing sallow too, and as the cheeks and temples drew in, the features stood large.

"I don't know how to grow old," said Charlotte, and truthfully, "I don't know how to let go. I haven't the resourcefulness, or quiet, or repose, for an old woman."

Always, way back as Charlotte Ransome, she had loved the showy, and she loved it still, as evidenced by the scarlet ribbon from which her fan hung, and the flowered muslin, showing the hand of village dressmaking. But she bore herself with the smiling pleasure of a child in them.

Willy joined them. He had been talking with Mr. Jonas, and evidently had declined the expedition too, for the little man, calling to the setter, went off grumbling and upbraiding the lot of them.

"We came early to avoid the heat," Charlotte explained as they went to join Molly and Mr. Henderson.

Molly's eyes swept Mrs. Leroy's youthful fineries wonderingly, curiously. It was no credit to Molly that her sixth sense lay in an instinctive selection of the appropriate in the beautiful. She wondered much like a child wonders over the mysterious, at what she, more often than not, saw on others.

She lolled back now in her simple dress, of which Alexina had reason to know the cost, and she lolled indifferently—Celeste or some one would press out the rumples when need be—then she held a pretty hand out to Charlotte.

But Mrs. Leroy, the greetings over, spread her draperies with some care and absorption as she sat down. She was another type of helpless person, the reverse of Molly, with a carping sense of responsibility.

Molly's gaze followed her concern with lazy interest in which lurked laughter, for the dress upon which the care was bestowed was so—well——

Alexina's face grew hot; she hated Molly, whose every thought she was reading; and so, by the girl's arrangement, they fell into two groups, Molly and the men making one, King William perched on the railing of the gallery, and Alexina and Mrs. Leroy the other, drawn a little apart. There was so much to say.

"We see the Kentucky papers," Charlotte told Alexina; "so I know of most of the happenings." She drew a little breath. "And Austen Blair is married?"

"Yes," said Alexina, "just before we came."

Charlotte was regarding her like a child with a secret trembling on its lips. "I was engaged to him once, Alexina, and we broke it." Light from many sides began to break in upon Alexina.

"Why," she said; "Mrs. Leroy!"

"It's odd, isn't it?" said Charlotte. "He was the only man ever caring for me that I never subjugated—except Willy here—" Her voice brightened, while she nodded, in her near-sighted way, at Mr. Henderson. "As for him, he's ruled me and browbeat me all his life." And Charlotte smiled contentedly at the minister.

Alexina reached out and, with a passionate sort of protectingness, took hold of the be-ringed hand wielding a fan with vivacity and sprightliness.

"I wish we could have given him more advantages," Mrs. Leroy was continuing, "but he's had to plan for us somehow, instead. I remember he wasn't eleven years old, though it seemed natural enough he should be doing it at the time, when we came over from St. Louis to Louisville without his father, and Willy had to buy the tickets and check the trunks. I suppose I ought to have realized it, but I never had done such things in my life, and I lost my purse in the depot, I remember, and a gentleman found it, and so Willy took hold.

"We sent him into town here, after we came to Aden, to the Presbyterian minister, who taught him. He wanted to go to college, not that he'd admit it now. Then as soon as he was any size he began at his father about reclaiming the grove. That is, Willy planned and Georges listened. Willy'd got an idea from Mr. Jonas that the railroad was coming through some day, just as it has, but it's been a long pull and a wait, for this is the first full yield for his trees. He's been offered seven thousand for the crop as it hangs, but the mortgage is eight thousand on the place, which went for fertilizing and ditching and sheds, and living, you know, so Willy is holding for eight thousand and Mr. Jonas is urging for nine."

Charlotte's pride in these statements was beaming.

"As soon as the grove proves itself, the place will sell for several times its old value, and we're going back to Kentucky—to Woodford. Willy wants to buy back my father's farm—not that he'll let me say that he does, he's so afraid of admitting anything, but when he was nineteen, three years ago, he had the measles—wasn't it dear and comical, like he was a child again—and he let me hold his hand, in the dark room, you know, and we talked about it, when we would go back."

The girl was patting Charlotte's hand softly and winking back tears while she laughed. Why tears? She herself had no idea.

Mrs. Leroy had a thousand questions to ask, she said, but somehow she never got to them.

"Dear me," she said presently, "we have to go and I've talked of nothing but my own affairs. In my solitude down here I've grown a shameless egotist."

As if she had been ever anything else, the unconscious soul!

"But to be with one of my own sex—some one linked with the past, too—is extenuation. There's so much a woman can't talk of with men, they have such different ways of seeing things, and let her love her men folk never so dearly, if there's none of her own sex around, a woman's lonesome, Alexina."

"Yes," said Alexina; "she is." But she said it absently, for she was conscious of King William's gaze being upon her. She looked up laughing, yet a little confused, for his look was warm.

He slipped along the railing, leaving Mrs. Garnier and the minister chatting. In this blue serge suit and straw hat he looked very like the King William of long ago, dark, keen, and impatient.

"What do you think of it—Aden?" he asked.

"I like it," said Alexina; "somehow as soon as you are in a thing the scene changes to out of doors; it used to be Indians on the common, or Crusoe in the yard, back there in Louisville."

"You began by saying you liked it," he reminded her. Did he think to tease? His eyes were naughty. Here was a zest; this was no Georgy.

"And I do," she said, standing to it. "I do like it."

Was he always laughing at people, this William Leroy?

"They are coming to spend a day with us this week, Alexina and her mother," Mrs. Leroy here told her son, at which for all the imperturbability of his countenance, Alexina was conscious of something a little less happy about the son.

"They're very good to come," he responded. The tone might be called guarded.

Certain recollections were crowding upon Alexina. Mrs. Leroy's management, her housekeeping, even to a child's comprehension, has been palpably erratic and unexpected.

The girl understood his masculine helplessness. Hers were the eyes that laughed now.

"I've set the table in your house before," she informed him, "while you made toast."

His countenance cleared. He met her gaze solemnly. "It's a bargain," he said; "what day, mother?"

That night Alexina was chatting with Mr. Jonas. She liked him. "You said this morning," she reminded him, "that Mrs. Leroy was the wisest, foolishest mother—what did you mean?"

"Just that," said Mr. Jonas; "hasn't her very incompetency made the boy?"

CHAPTER III

For the next three days Mr. Henderson avoided them. He spoke in the hall or dining-room, to be sure, but joined them no more in plans or on the gallery.

And Molly turned petulant. Why had they ever come to Aden, she moaned. "Can't you propose something, Malise?" she besought.

Alexina, endeavoring to write letters, felt tired, having been up at Molly's call a dozen times in the night.

"We're going to spend to-morrow with Mrs. Leroy," she reminded her mother.

"She looks like Mrs. Malaprop," said Molly crossly.

The daughter's flace flushed. Youth is rawly sensitive to ridicule of its friends. Besides, what would they find at Lake Nancy? It would be poor, she expected that, and it might be—pitiful? Not to her, not to her, but Molly was so unable to see behind things; if a thing was poor to Molly it was only poor, and she said so. Alexina hoped her mother wouldn't go.

But when Friday came Molly, in feverish, restless state, was ready for anything. She even brightened up over it, and it was Alexina who was petulant, and put on one dress and took it off, and tried another, even with William Leroy down-stairs in the wagonette, waiting.

But she felt better as she came out into the sunshine. The dress she had finally decided on seemed to settle on her into sudden jauntiness.

William Leroy shook hands. There was a comfortable sense of humor about him.

"It's fair to divide families into component parts on occasions," he stated, and put Alexina in a place by his own and Molly behind. Molly pouted.

"And, besides, we are going to drop Henderson at a sick parishioner's on the way," he said, with a naughty glance at her. "I met him starting to the livery stable just now and stopped him."

Molly's face cleared. She met his eyes with insouciance, but, somehow, one felt all at once that she liked him better.

Mr. Henderson came out with a satchel and climbed in. He looked stern and uninviting, Alexina thought, but the note of

Molly's random remarkings promptly brightened. Willy flicked the whip above the big gray span and off they trotted across town, westward.

The morning was keen enough so that the sun's warmth was pleasant and quickened the blood. Aden was left behind. Here and there on the outskirts, frame-houses, crudely and hideously cheap, were building; land everywhere was being cleared, the felled trees lying about, the whirl of a portable sawmill telling their destiny, while burning stumps filled the air with creosote pungency.

Then the despoilments of progress were left behind and the untouched pine woods closed about them, and trees rose tall, straight, twigless, to where a never-ceasing murmur soughed, and the light came sifting, speckled, and flickering through the gloom, upon the sandy ground and scrub palmetto beneath.

Alexina breathed deep. It was quiet and peaceful and solemn.

"Isn't it?" said Willy sociably.

She looked up; she hadn't spoken. The trees thinned, grew sparse, and the road came out into the open. A mile further on they entered a belt of hummock land, a wild growth of live-oak, cypress, magnolia, thicketed, intertwisted, rank. Gray moss trailed and swept their faces as they passed under, vines clambered and swung and festooned, gophers crawled out of the path, and a gleaming snake slid across the road and into the palmetto undergrowth.

He was looking at her as they came out, she flushed and ecstatic.

"But wait," he said, "until I show it to you after a while, in bloom."

Just beyond the hummock he drew rein at a clearing before an unpainted frame-house, even cheaper and more hideous than the most. Mr. Henderson got out, Willy handing the satchel after him.

"It's a death-bed," he said under his breath to the two, as the minister went toward the house; "that's the pitiful part of it down here, people taking all they've got to get here, to die."

"Don't—don't tell about it," said Molly sharply.

King Leroy touched the mules and they went on. A little later Alexina felt Molly's hand upon her. "Come back with me, Malise," she begged. Her face looked drawn and gray.

"But we're there," explained King, and a minute after turned in at an old iron gate, flanked by two ancient live-oaks. An osage hedge, cut back upon old woody stock, stretched about the place either side from the gate. Within, the driveway made a sweep off towards buildings in the rear, while a shell path led up to the house, which was of frame, wide, with porches across the front, up-stairs and down. Bermuda grass covered the sandy surface of the yard, which was large and sloped back towards the lake, visible through the grove. Here and there a banana plant reared its ragged luxuriance and a stunted palm or two; there was an old rustic seat beneath a gnarled wild orange tree.

As King helped them out, Charlotte appeared and came animatedly down the path between the borders of crepe myrtle. Alexina ran ahead to meet her. The girl's hands were quite cold. Mrs. Leroy's white dress, relic of bygone fashion, fluttered with rose-colored ribbons, and suddenly Alexina seemed to see a wide old cottage in a shrub-grown yard, and on its porch a lady in a gauzy dress with rosy ribbons, gathering a little child into her lap.

The girl threw her arms about this Charlotte in the old white dress, and then, because her eyes were full of foolish tears, ran on, for the Captain was on the porch, in a cane armchair, a line of blue smoke trailing up from the cigar in his fingers. Laughing and breathless she went up the steps and their eyes met, never a word spoke either, but the hand of the man closed on the girl's and rested there until the others came up.

"Willy wouldn't let me do a thing about your coming, Alexina," Mrs. Leroy began, as she reached them, "he said he'd tend to it himself. He wouldn't let me give a direction. He's fussy sometimes and notionate. It's like the time when the surveyors were staying with us, and Mandy set some dishes on a chair. I'd already told him she didn't know how to clear a table for dessert and he said I ought to have taught her."

The girl's eyes danced. "You're all of you the same, the very same; not one of the three has changed."

Charlotte beamed. She took it with undisguised pleasure that she had not changed.

Willy came round the house. He had taken the mules to the stable. "I'm holding you to that bargain," he reminded Alexina.

Molly looked bored. Such things were only playful and interesting as she was part of them. Then she said she was tired. She evidently had no mind for a morning with Mrs. Leroy.

"You shall go up and lie down in my room," said Charlotte.

The three women went in. The hall dividing the house was wide and high, its floor of boards a foot wide, and bare but for a central strip of carpet. An old mahogany hat-tree stood against one wall, a mahogany sofa against the other, with straight backed chairs flanking both. It was all laboriously clean and primly bare. The rooms up-stairs were big, with old mahogany furniture set squarely about them.

"They didn't want me to bring the furniture, Willy and his father, when we came," Charlotte told Alexina; "it cost more to get it here than to buy new. But I didn't want new; I wanted this."

Everything was innocent of covers or hangings, nor were there any pictures. She explained this.

"I don't know how to drive nails," she told them, "and Willy and the Captain don't care. Willy had the house papered this fall in case of people coming about buying, and the papering men took the nails out of the walls and Willy won't bother to put them in. They're all in here."

Charlotte didn't mean the nails; she threw open a closet door and ancestral Ransomes, neatly set against the walls, peered out of the dark.

Alexina put a hand over Charlotte's on the door-knob. Molly yawned.

"It seems chilly here in my room," said Charlotte; "the sun isn't round this side yet. Put your hats on the bed and Mrs. Garnier shall go lie on Willy's sofa."

They followed her across the hall. "He has his bed and things in there," she explained, nodding towards an adjoining room, "and he keeps his books and such in here."

On the floor, otherwise uncarpeted, lay a bear skin. There was a sofa against the wall and a plain deal table in the center of the room, piled with papers, books and pipes, about a lamp. There were some chairs, a gun rack, antlers, an alligator skin, and some colored prints of English hunting scenes on the walls, and an old-fashioned brass mounted cellarette, hung in an angle. The south window looked out across the grove upon Nancy; between the two east windows stood an old secretary book-case.

Charlotte suggesting that Mrs. Garnier put on a wrapper, the two went back to her bedroom. Alexina stood hesitating. She felt a sense of surreptitiousness and embarrassment, and then took a step to the book-case—any one might do that much—and read the titles of the books.

About orange culture and fertilizing these first seemed to be, and those next were concerned with the breeding of stock. They meant Woodford and the future, probably. She skipped to another shelf. Buckle's Introduction to the History of Civilization, Hallam's Middle Ages, Wealth of Nations, Wilhelm Meister, Poems of Heinrich Heine, several volumes of Spencer and Huxley, Slaves of Paris, Lecoq the Detective, File No. 118, The Lerouge Case, The Scotland Yard Detective, Carlyle's French Revolution, Taxidermitology, Renan's Life of Jesus, Pole on Whist, Hoyle, Tom Sawyer, Past and Present, Pickwick Papers, Herodotus, an unbroken shelf of Walter Scott, A Pair of Blue Eyes, Cousin Pons, Drainage, Pendennis, Small Fruit Culture.

Why, here was a world, within these glass doors, she did not know. Yet she had read diligently among Uncle Austen's books. She looked back in memory over his shelves. Macaulay, yes, Uncle Austen cared so essentially for Macaulay, and for Bancroft and Prescott, and Whittier and Lowell. There were the standards in fiction and poetry in well bound sets. Uncle Austen himself admired Alexander Pope and Franklin's Autobiography; he liked Charles Reade's novels, too, bearing on institutional reforms——

Here Mrs. Leroy and Molly came back, Molly in a white wrapper and Charlotte bearing a pillow and a silk quilt.

"Willy's calling," she told Alexina; "he wants you."

Willy was at the foot of the stairs. He waited for her to get down, watching her hand on the banister. The wood was dark and the hand was white and slender. Then he held out a big checked apron. She walked into it and looked over her shoulder while he tied the strings behind.

It takes time to set a table, when neither is just certain where things are to be found. Hunting together in sideboard, cupboards, and on pantry shelves brings about a feeling of knowing each other very well. There was so much, too, to talk about.

"Do you remember—" It was Alexina pausing with a goblet in hand to ask it.

"Have you forgot—" Willy, producing a carving set, would rejoin.

Presently she paused. Twice she started to speak, hesitated, then got it out. "There's a thing I want to ask you, or rather want to say—" Her voice was a little tremulous and breathless.

"Yes," said Willy.

"You — you remember — that is, you haven't forgot the 'King William?'"

She was looking away from him and he looking at her, his mouth odd, yet smiling, too. She was an honest and a pleasant thing to look upon. "Why, yes," he told her; "as well as I remember the raft we put off on from the desert island and the plains, back of the stable—have you forgotten the trackless plains where we sat down to starve in the snow, with never a sign of deer or buffalo for days, or even a thing on wing? We'd just lighted on Hiawatha those days. There was an Indian, by the way, came up from the grass water yesterday and brought us venison for to-day."

It was evident Willy did not mean to let her return to the subject.

Presently Alexina untied the apron. "I must see your mother some," she said.

"But she won't want you," declared his mother's son; "she's overjoyed to think you're with me. She thinks there is something deficient in her son; she insists I've never spoken to a girl since we left you in Louisville. Besides, she's in the kitchen; hear her out there now, all fluttered herself and fluttering Aunt Mandy."

But Alexina would go. "I must call Molly in time for dinner," she insisted.

(*To be continued*)

THE NEW LOVE

BY

WITTER BYNNER

CONTENT beneath a lulling tree
That I and crickets know,
To keep awake, I count the birds;
They twitter to and fro.

You think no girl could ever love
So dull a lad as this?
You never saw a neater girl
Than one I us'd to kiss.

And yet I did not dally long,
Nor want her here with me:
The sun and I are keeping tryst,
And she would make us three!

THE LOSS OF THE "LEO"

BY

COLIN McKAY

AUTHOR OF "COMING ON THE COAST," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY M. J. BURNS

THE "Leo," a stout brigantine, bound up to Quebec, laden with molasses, had run through the Gut of Canso and was standing well over towards Cape George to take her departure due north for the Magdalens.

The middle watch had just begun. The mate, his head nodding sleepily, staggered fore and aft along the quarter-deck. Old Scotty was forward on the lookout and I was taking a trick at the wheel.

The brigantine, heeling slightly to a brisk westerly breeze, slipped merrily through the short sibilant seas. On her weather bow, Cape George, its bristling ridges sharply outlined against the sky, reared its grim height out of the inky sea. Overhead the heavens were clear of cloud, but covered with a tawny, copperish film that obscured the stars. At irregular intervals, wave on wave of cold air, coming down from the mountains, swept across the bay.

The burnished, almost luminous, aspect of the sky, the bewildered tumblings of the black waters beneath, the sudden changes of temperature, set the senses tingling with expectancy. As I looked forward I could see the glow of Old Scotty's pipe moving about, uneasily.

Ere long a small compact cloud, like a hooded cobra's head, rose over the highest ridge of the ragged mountain range, and wriggled rapidly zenithwards, dragging fold on fold of dense black vapor after it.

The mate gave no heed. Like many mates out of Lunenburg, he usually stopped on deck all day, painting and polishing, and at night was seldom in a condition to stand his watch properly.

Scotty came aft to the waist and waited around expectantly. At length, realizing that the mate noticed nothing, he observed casually:

"It's bankin' up hell-bent-for-election there to wind'ard, sir."

The mate stopped, looked blankly about him, then asked what the matter was.

"There's a black squall coming down off the mountains—can't you see it?" answered Scotty impatiently. "Time you were getting sail in, ain't it?"

The mate blinked sleepily at the cloud bank, then glanced aloft at the sails. "Oh, dat—dat's only a thunder cloud, I guess," he said.

"Thunder cloud be blowed," growled Scotty. "There's wind behind that stuff and a power of it. If you knew your business, you'd have had her snugged down by this time."

The mate was too sleepy to realize his duty, but sufficiently awake to resent being told his business. "Go forward an' keep a lookout—that's all you've got to do," he blustered. "I'm lookin' after the ship yet, and I don't want no drunken shell-back tellin' me my work."

"All right," quoth Scotty coolly. "If you knew anything, I wouldn't have to tell you."

"That'll do now," cried the mate. "If you knew enough to keep yourself warm, you wouldn't be a common sailor at your age. So don't talk to me."

The night grew darker, the heavens more threatening. To windward the haughty promontory disappeared in an impenetrable pall of gloom, and overhead, squadron on squadron of convex clouds, their black bellies bulging as though big with wrath, rolled rapidly to the northeast, twisting and turning tortuously. The breeze blew stronger, but fitfully. The ship complained alow and aloft, moaning as if in terror of the menacing sky. But the mate, sitting on the forepart of the house, nodded heedlessly.

Suddenly the ship heeled to a hard gust—heeled till her main rail was awash. The royal collapsed flutteringly—Scotty had let the halliards run. And, hearing the ominous rushing sound of the squall and the crackle of wind-torn waters, I kept the ship off before it.

The mate awoke to the situation with a start. "Up with the helm there; keep her off before it. Call all hands to shorten her down, Scotty," he shouted excitedly.

But ere the mate could start a halliard the squall was upon us, raving like a frenzied genii. The ship trembled from the impact, as if an avalanche of bricks had struck her. On the instant the sails began to go—whiff, biff, slam, bang, they went before the blast. Then, as if the genii of the storm desired to see what devastation had been wrought, a long, quivering flash of lightning rushed athwart the black skies and threw a ghastly light over the raging sea. The ship's plight was revealed by the vivid, vibrant light, her spars standing out naked and desolate. She was stripped completely—only a few shreds of canvas streamed from spars and stays or flapped about the yards. And when darkness, swift and blinding, followed the lightning's flash, witch-fires climbed the rigging and danced along the yards—a phenomenon, under the circumstances, well calculated to awe men.

The captain came up the companion and, perceiving the condition of his ship aloft, stood speechless with astonishment and rage. The second mate, Scotty, and the watch came aft, secured the main boom amidships and got down the pieces of broken gaff. The mate, dazed and witless, stood by uselessly. The ship fled like a frightened thing before the screaming squall.

At length the old man found his voice. "Why didn't you call me—or take sail off her? Couldn't you see this coming?" he yelled in the mate's ear.

"I thought it wouldn't be anything," answered the mate sullenly.

"You thought!" screamed the old man. "Why didn't you call me if you didn't know? You've been asleep, curse you." And the captain, with bitter blasphemy, poured out the vials of his wrath upon the mate's hapless head.

Scotty came aft to give me a hand at the wheel. The old man, catching sight of him, was seized with an access of rage. "Why didn't you wake the mate or call me, you blankety-blank whisky butt?" he demanded furiously.

"'Twasn't my place," Scotty growled.

"Blast me! I believe all hands were to sleep," roared the old man. "That good-for-nothing galoot of a mate was, anyway."

"Maybe so," shouted Scotty sarcastically. "Shouldn't have let him frig about decks all day at his statute labor and gingerbread work. Might know he'd sleep at night."

The old man fired a rattling volley of curses at things in general and concluded with an anathema on his own eyes.

"Cursin' won't mend matters, old man," remonstrated Scotty. "Better look after the ship."

The captain cooled down a bit and wondered what might be done.

"Try to make Port Hood, or get in under the lee of the islands thereabouts and hook her," Scotty advised.

"Can't take her in—don't know the coast."

"Well, I can take her in, if you can't," averred Scotty confidently. "If we bring the wind well on the quarter, we'll make it. Shall I?"

"No; keep her right before it. This'll blow over 'fore long, I guess."

"All right! Do as you please," growled Scotty. "But you're makin' a mistake."

The ship fled on as if all the furies were after her. The black cloud bank to windward broke up into ragged detachments, which skurried rapidly across the sky. The night lightened a bit; the lightning flashes grew less frequent and finally ceased. But the gale blew with unrelenting violence, and the weird jack-o'-lanterns glowed on yard-arm and truck. And all about the flying craft, the short, swift surges—their foaming crests emitting a strange, supernatural-looking light—snarled like a pack of wolves, and now and then hurled tons of luminous water into the waist.

An hour or more the ship drove on, but still the gale gave no further sign of breaking. The old man became thoroughly alarmed at last.

"At this rate, we'll be ashore by daylight," he cried. "Get the trysail up; close-reef it, an' bend it. We'll try her hove-to."

The captain took the wheel and we got the trysail ready—halliards hooked on and sheets aft. The mate reported everything all right; then, standing by the halliards, we waited anxiously.

Presently the ship's head swerved to the northward and we hastily hoisted the storm-sail. As she swung broadside to it, the force of the wind pressing on her spars and the shred of trysail heeled her over suddenly till her decks slanted like the roof of a house. And then, as she rounded to, her head fell heavily into a deep trough, and a stupendous sea—a hoary-headed sinner—rolled out of the roaring chaos to windward, rose above her weather bow till its flaring crest was level with forebrace pennant block, poised menacingly for a single breathless moment, and then, with a sudden tremendous swoop, broke right over the decks. All of the ship forward disappeared under a swirling swath of foam, and while she recoiled from the terrific shock, the broken sea swept aft like a tidal bore, rolling over the poop as high as a man's head, picking up Scotty and me, who clung to halliards, and bearing us with it till we brought up against the main-boom with a force that nearly knocked the life out of us.

"Let go the halliards—get hold of the boom," yelled Scotty.

Somehow, though breathless and dazed, I found footing on the skylights, let go the halliards, and got hold of the boom. The head of the trysail dropped, and the sail, giving two or three tremendous slaps, flogged into rags.

The ship emerged from the ocean of foam, and presently—before another big sea could get a crack at her—fell off, gathered way, and fled headlong before it.

"She got it good that time," said Scotty, straightening up and looking forward. "The other fellows were clinging to the main-rigging. The port boat was gone off the house and the starboard one looked as if it was bilged. It was a wonder the fore-house hadn't gone. "The old man won't try to heave her again, I guess," added Scotty; "we may as well take the wheel again."

The old man, his brine-soaked beard glistening in the ray of light from the binnacle, glared at us strangely as we scrambled aft.

"That you, Scotty?" he shouted. "Where are the others?"

"They're all right, I guess," answered Scotty. "They were clinging to the main-rigging when the sea struck us."

"Well, I never thought she'd do that," said the old man, astounded and aggrieved.

The bewildered skipper surrendered the wheel and took up his position in the companionway. The mates, the cook, and the other two lads scrambled aft, drenched, breathless, very troubled.

The old man shouted something to the mate—something about the damage done—but neither the mate nor the men gave any heed.

The ship might have sprung a leak, but what odds? If a man went forward to investigate, ten chances to one he'd never get back. And even if she was leaking, they couldn't man the pumps.

So the old packet drove on to her doom, while the fierce, gray-bearded surges hurled their hissing heads obliquely across her quarter and into her waist. Scotty and I sweated at the wheel; the others rigged life-lines and crouched on top of the house, holding on for dear life.

After a time the east grew gray, and soon we saw, emerging out of the gloom, the mountainous coast of Cape Breton, vapor-veiled, forbidding, grim. And then, as the dank dawn scattered the shifting shadows, we saw the foreshore and the mighty seas breaking against the base of outlying bluffs, leaping in fountains of furious foam, mast-high and higher, up the frowning face of sheer red-stone cliffs.

The ship was barely three miles off, driving on to her doom. The old man gazed, we all gazed, fascinated, transfixed, for a space. At last the captain straightened up, tense as a backstay, and called out sharply, loudly:

"S'pose she'd ride it out if we let go both anchors and cut away the spars?"

The mate turned his head, saw that the old man was speaking to him, and yelled back tremulously:

"I don't know, sir; I don't know."

"Well, we'll have to try it," the captain cried dubiously. "There's nothing else to do that I can see. Get forward and clear the anchors!"

Suddenly Scotty bristled with imperious fury, with importunate truculence.

"Good Lord, man! Where's your wits? Don't talk of tryin' such a fool trick," he bellowed. "She wouldn't ride at her anchors half an hour—in this wind—in this sea."

"What can we do then?" the old man queried petulantly. "I hardly believe she'd ride it out, but I don't know what else to do."

"She's bound to go ashore," said Scotty, with a touch of contempt. "She's bound to go ashore; so the best thing to do is to run her ashore ourselves. She's under some sort of command now, and, if we can find a good place to beach her, we may get out of her."

The old man fidgeted, ill at ease, then, as if he had lost all interest in life, answered inadvertently:

"Well, you can beach her if you think it best. I'd like to try to save the ship, but I don't want to make you lose your lives."

Old Scotty, his expression of contempt changing swiftly to insight, to sympathy, glanced keenly at the skipper's haggard face.

"You can't save the ship, captain," he said respectfully, but assuredly. "You'll be lucky if you save your crew."

The captain started as if suddenly recalled to a new sense of his responsibility.

"Yes, we'll beach her," he cried resolutely. "Jump aloft, Scotty, and see if you can pick out a good place. I'll be with you after I have a look at the chart."

Scotty called the mate to take his place at the wheel and then went aloft—up the main-rigging. The skipper followed him presently. In the shrouds those two gray-headed old codgers, swung dizzily through crazy circles, exposed to the fierce force of the wind, examined the coast line and powwowed imperturbably. Then Old Scotty motioned to the mate and me, and we changed the direction of the ship's head about two points. She went along on her new course when the second trimmed the yards all right, though she took more water over her than when running right before it.

As we closed in with the foam-fringed coast, we could see we were heading for a little cove, a gap in the sheer cliffs, where the land sloped from high bluffs on either side, and where the sea, breaking with less violence than elsewhere, ran up a red beach to a little stretch of marshy looking land.

The old man and Scotty descended to the deck and came aft. Scotty brushed the mate from the wheel. "That's no way to stand at a wheel runnin' on shore," he bellowed. "She'd throw you over the main truck when she struck." The mate got among the life-lines on top of the house.

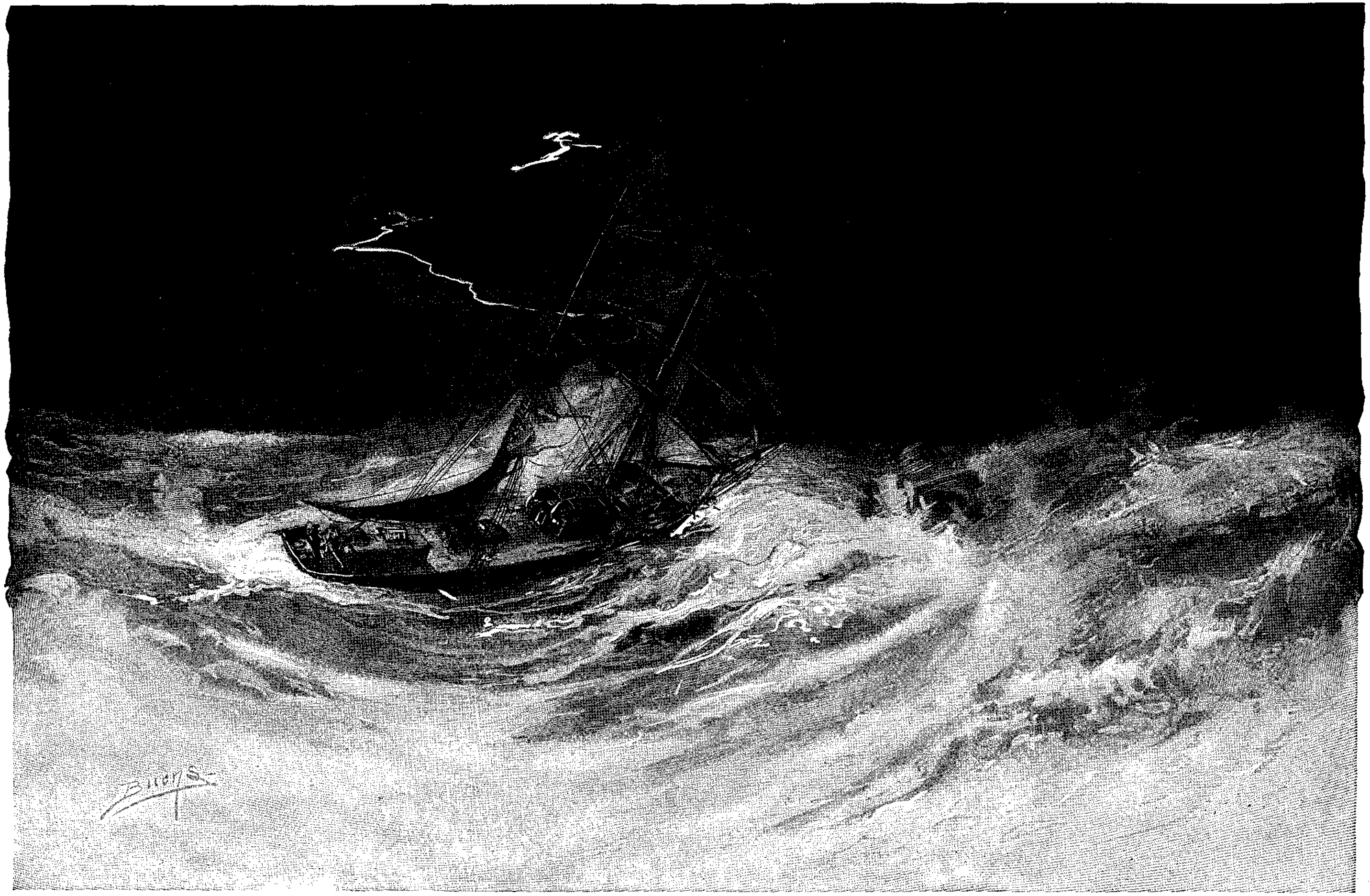
The ship entered the broken water and, poised on the fore slope of a stupendous sea, swept, like a bolt from the blue, up towards the beach. Old Scotty's voice, penetrating, imperative, rang through the sinister rote of the surf: "Let go the wheel—look out, you." And I left the wheel hurriedly.

The ship rasped her forefoot on the sand and a slight tremor ran through her hull. Scotty bounced on top of the house like a rubber ball.

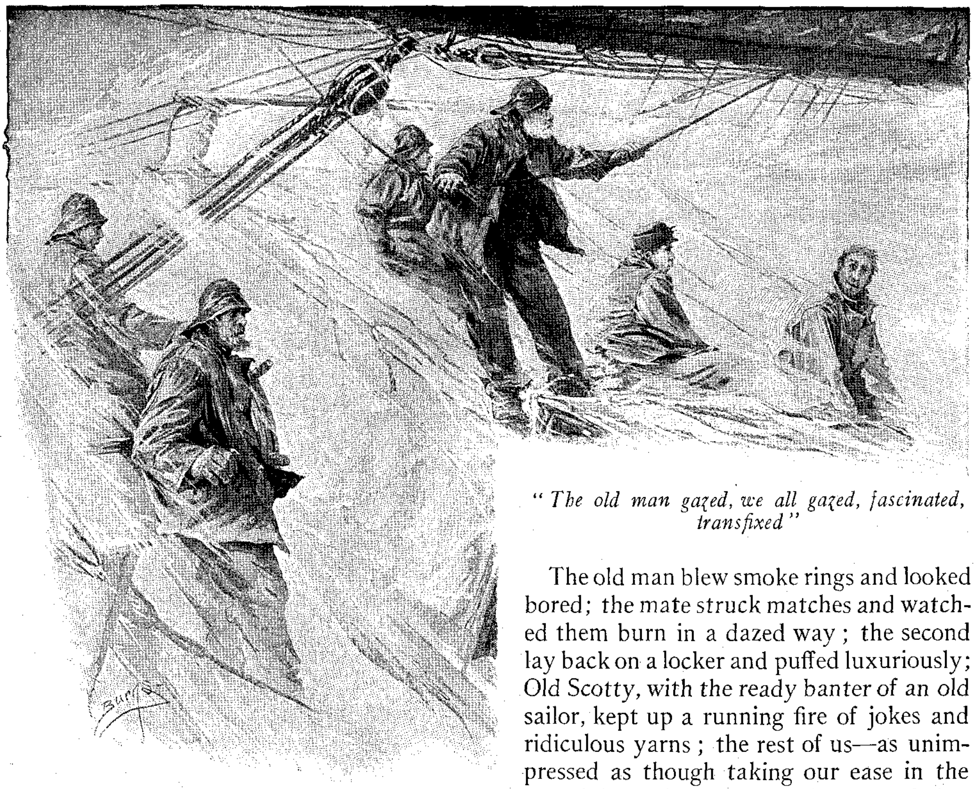
Next instant she struck aft with a crash of timbers—with a shock that nearly shook our hearts out of our bodies. The masts bent till their trucks seemed to kiss; the stout mainstay curled up like a watch-spring; but when I expected to see all her top hamper go over the bows, the tall spars straightened, taut as ever, quivering like fishing rods. The wheel gave a whirl and flew overside; the steering gear disappeared in a hundred pieces; and suddenly the rudder post stood up through her stern like a jigger mast. Then the following sea surged under her counter, twisted her stern obliquely up the beach, and left her lying on her bilge with her decks listed, luckily, away from the sea.

And there she lay, jiggling, thumping, bumping in the sand, while the ugly combers caroomed against her viciously and broke in fountains of foam right over her sturdy hull. She was hardly a hundred feet from dry land, but between us and safety the infuriated sea—white with swirling froth, red with stirred-up sand—boiled like a caldron, raged like the mill-tail of hell.

For a little while we lay in the life-lines, letting the waters wash over us, looking about us. The Cape Breton coast, its colossal features seen evanescently through the smoking sprays, towered around and above, desolate, somber, grim. Around the shore of the little cove there was no sign of life—not even a boat-house. Up the mountain side, far up, a few isolated cottages perched precariously on dizzy ridges only emphasized the desolate aspect of the land. There was not a man in sight—no



"The ship's plight was revealed by the vivid, vibrant light"



"The old man gazed, we all gazed, fascinated, transfixed"

help at hand. It was not yet five o'clock—too early for shore-folk to be stirring on a stormy day.

Scotty shouted something—I could not hear what—and scrambled down the fore cabin companionway. We followed him, warily. After the turmoil and tumult on deck, coming into the cabin was like entering a haven of peace, though under our feet we could feel the timbers creaking and cracking as she thumped upon the beach. The old man and Scotty discussed the situation easily. The ship would hang together a long time, they thought, and until the folk ashore woke up and discovered us, it wouldn't be any use to try to get a line ashore. In the meantime we might make ourselves as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

So, at a word from the captain, the cook got us some canned stuff and hard-tack out of the cabin pantry and, with some raw rum to wash it down, we made a hearty meal. After, the old man presented us with a clay pipe apiece and some good tobacco and we smoked. It was cold, beastly cold for August, and we were soaked to the skin, but we were fairly comfortable.

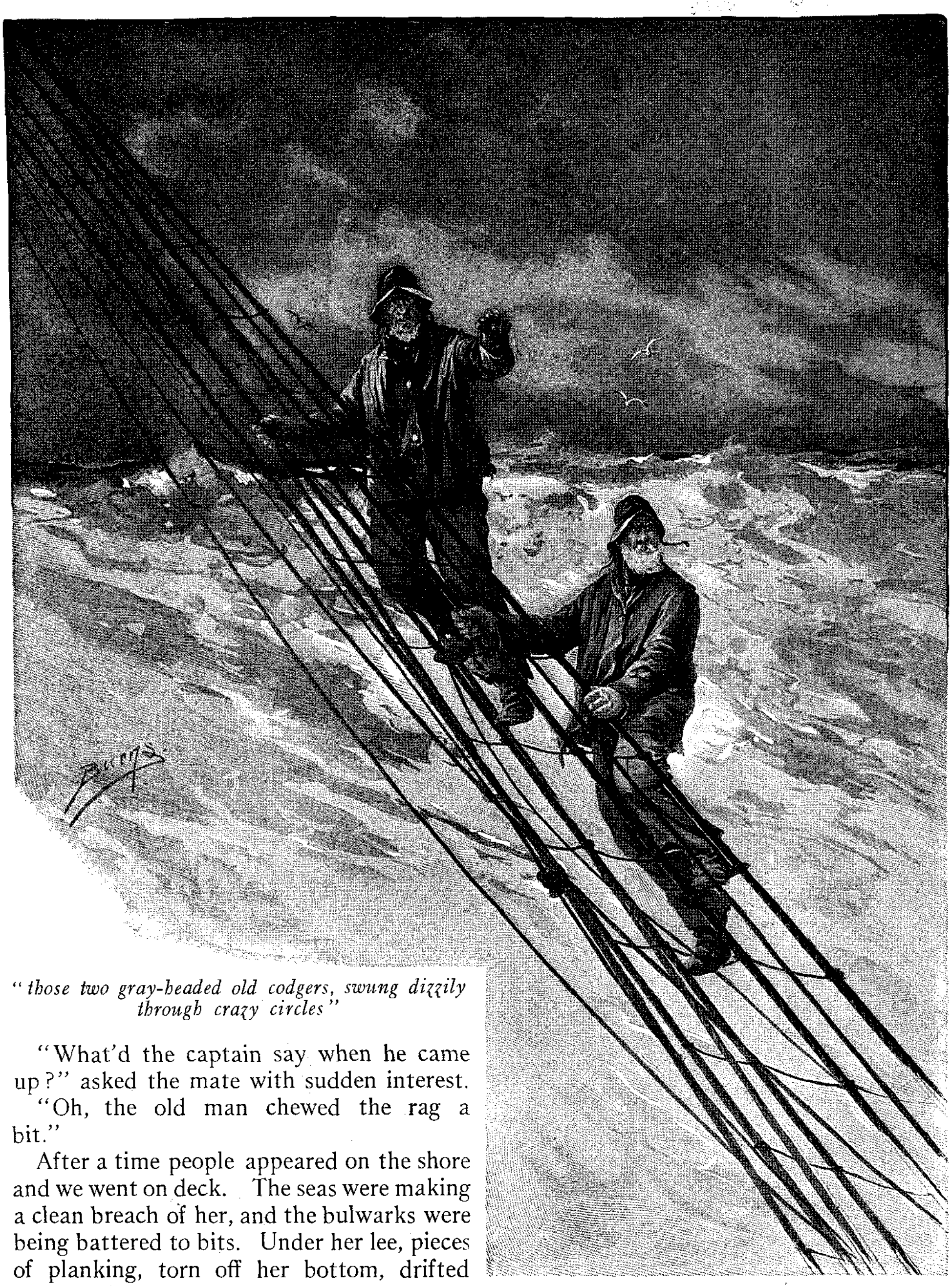
The old man blew smoke rings and looked bored; the mate struck matches and watched them burn in a dazed way; the second lay back on a locker and puffed luxuriously; Old Scotty, with the ready banter of an old sailor, kept up a running fire of jokes and ridiculous yarns; the rest of us—as unimpressed as though taking our ease in the captain's cabin, while the hull was being battered in pieces about our ears, was an every-day experience—lounged and smoked and laughed at Scotty's yarns. It was something of a surprise to realize how unconcerned we could be under such circumstances, but it was a pleasant, exhilarating surprise, like a bit of unexpected good luck.

"You ought to have seen the sails go," Scotty was saying to the second. "Reminds me of the old 'Kennebec,' fullrigger, out of Bath. The old man had his son aboard, second mate of her. One morning the lad called the old man up to have a look at the weather—it was looking pretty lurid, pretty dusty. The old man sticks his bald head up the companion and takes a squint around.

"'Guess it's only the pride o' the mornin' flarin' up that way, Willie,' he growled. 'Needn't shorten her down yet. Give me a call, though, if it looks any worse.'

"The old man goes below, and about ten minutes afterwards, whiff, biff, every rag went but the maintopsail. Willie put his head down the scuttle and sings out as cool as you please:

"'Say, dad, the pride o' the mornin' has been aboard an' chewed up every blame thing in sight 'cept the maintopsail, an' I reckon it's got a tarnation fine appetite for that, too.'"



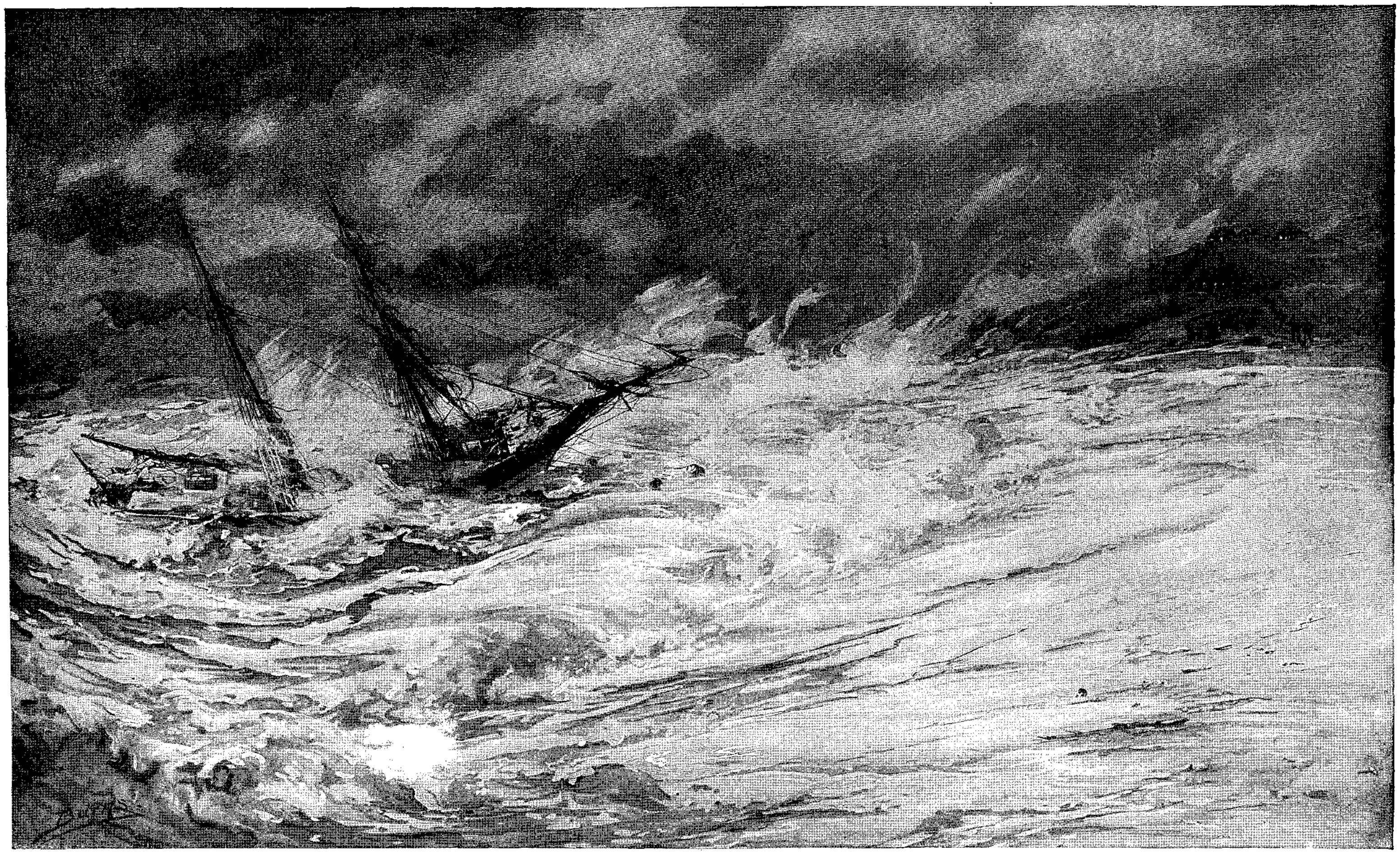
"those two gray-headed old codgers, swung dizzily through crazy circles"

"What'd the captain say when he came up?" asked the mate with sudden interest.

"Oh, the old man chewed the rag a bit."

After a time people appeared on the shore and we went on deck. The seas were making a clean breach of her, and the bulwarks were being battered to bits. Under her lee, pieces of planking, torn off her bottom, drifted among the debris from her decks. On shore a half-dozen men were gesticulating wildly and bellowing themselves black in the face. They might have saved their breath. It was silly to shout in the teeth of that gale—in the face of the frenzied sea. If they'd been a hundred miles away we could have heard them as easily. And they could not help us, though they were hardly a hundred feet away—they could not help us till we got a line ashore. That was what we gathered from their signs.

So we went to work. We got up empty water barrels, bent lines to them, and threw



“The seas were making a clean breach of her” them into the sea. The wind caught them and whirled them shoreward, but when we expected to see them land on the beach, they would turn and race out to sea. They moved swiftly here and there—anywhere but the place we wanted them to go. At the end of an hour we had a regular flotilla of barrels, puncheons, life-buoys, oil cans, demijohns, floating around us, but we couldn't get a craft in that fool fleet to take a line ashore for us. And all the time we fooled with that silly fleet the old "Leo" shook and shivered, groaned and quivered, and bumped and worried woundily in the sand. And all the time oceans of water poured over us—oceans mixed with sand, which got in our eyes, our mouths, our ears, hair, clothes, making us itch and smart and rave like lunatics.

At last Old Scotty, angered and disgusted, declared he would swim ashore with a line. The old man objected, protested vehemently. But Scotty tied the end of the log line about his waist and got in the lee fore-rigging to study the currents, eddies, seas. The people on shore—there were hundreds gathered now, men, women, and children—perceived his purpose and, motioning like mad, warned him not to try it. Scotty came down, bade the second pay out the line, and got ready to jump. But the old man caught the line from the second and held fast. And Scotty, coming to his senses, recognized the folly of trying to swim through the weltering surf.

All hands adjourned to the cabin to take a spell and consider things. The cabin was half full of water by this time—you could swim down to leeward—and the cook was there, mumbling to himself and trying frantically to salvage the provisions in his pantry. The nigger was in a blue funk—frightened out of his wits. His face, ordinarily as black as a bat, was a bluish, putty white; a horrid sight.

The captain called a council of war, whereat Scotty proposed that we cut away the masts. The ship was nearer land than when she struck, because the tide was falling, and the foremast, he thought, might fall far enough up the beach to let us get ashore along it.

So we cut away the masts, but, instead of falling where we wanted them to, the silly sticks crashed down alongside. And there they hung, grinding against the hull, chewing the topsides into match-wood.

Old Scotty, swearing like a pirate, went below. We followed casually. We couldn't smoke now—couldn't find dry matches—but we chewed tobacco and spit with spite over the cabin fittings. At Scotty's suggestion we made play boats, rigged them, and sent them cruising, but they wouldn't take a line ashore for us. Scotty himself made a kite and after a time got it flying, but when it soared high an eddy of wind caught it, dashed it against the face of the cliff on our starboard hand, and it fell in pieces into the sea, where no man could reach it.

So the morning wore away. We seemed fated never to get a line ashore and we began to feel blue. The ship was going to pieces under us; long planks, heavy timbers, innumerable puncheon staves, came up from her bottom and floated around us. The seas churned the released molasses into golden brown foam. The sky hung over us, low down, like a sheet of lead. And it blew viciously, without the least let-up, as if it intended to blow forever.

"Well, there's one consolation," growled Scotty grimly; "if we can't leave her, she'll soon leave us. But I'm not giving up hope yet. I've been shipwrecked six times already—been in worse plights than this—and always pulled through somehow. I'm going to get some things I want to save. Come along one of you."

Scotty and I worked our way forward over the twisting, torn-up deck. The fore-house stood, but the inside of it was a wreck. The bulkhead between the galley and fo'castle was torn out, and the galley fittings were distributed about the floor and in our bunks. Scotty's chest, the only thing that had survived intact the general wreck, squatted serenely on a pile of rubbish in one corner. Scotty opened it, took out a small waterproof case and examined its contents, a few yellow papers and yellow coins. Impelled by curiosity, I leaned over his shoulder and looked. Old Scotty held in his hands a foreign-going master's certificate, a life-saving medal, and a gold eagle engraved with the name of a famous clipper ship and the name on the ticket. I stared. There was a chantey about that ship and her skipper that we used to sing going to tall water.

"Where'd you get those things, Scotty?" I asked.

"Oh, I've had 'em a long time," said Scotty carelessly, as he tucked the case into his bosom. "I used to sail some crack ships before the wife—before I took to crooking my arm too much for my own good. Look out!"

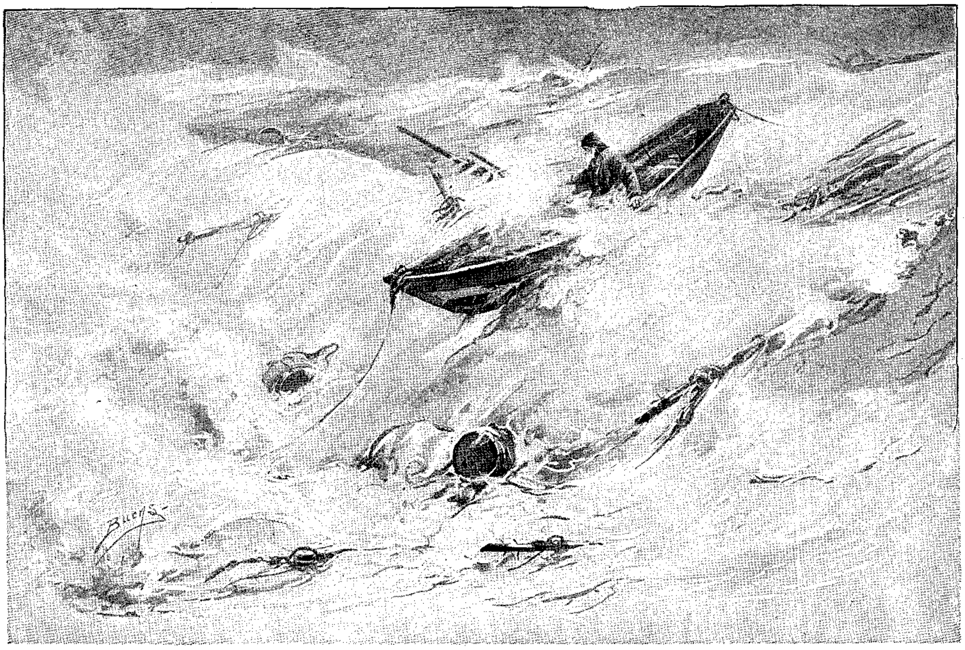
A huge sea leaped over the old hulk and filled the fo'castle.

After a time I got to my feet and looked about me. Old Scotty, who had been knocked down too, presently rose out of a sea of rubbish, like a good-humored, gray-headed god presiding over the wreck of things. As the water subsided, I saw that he was holding on to a small keg—the fo'-castle molasses keg.

"The Lord knows where this thing came from just now," he said; "but when I felt it strike against me, I nabbed it. I'm goin' to have another try at getting a line ashore."

After he had rigged it Scotty lugged it forward and climbed out on the jib-boom. I made myself fast to the capstan on the fo'castle head and stood ready to pay out the line. Ashore the people were more excited than they had been for some time. Apparently they expected to see the ship go to pieces at any moment. At any rate, men with ropes under their arms stood by, ready, I suppose, to dash into the surf and try to reach any of us who might be flung in near enough.

Scotty reached the end of the jib-boom and, sitting astride, swung the keg as if it were a lead. A big roller came tumbling in and the keg dropped on its crest. The sea swept in, bearing the little barrel, swept in as if it intended to fling its burden far up the beach. The roller broke, the water turned to run out to sea, and the keg started to follow it. A man with a rope under his arms dashed down the beach after the retreating sea—after the keg. Another comber rolling in shut out my view and went over man and keg. A moment after, however, I saw the man floating on his back in the surf, with the keg hugged to his breast, and the shore folk were hastily hauling him to land. The man's posture, the way he clung to the cask, the way he was being hauled through the surf, struck me as comical. It strikes me so even yet, when I think of him—which may not be a proper way to think of a man who has saved your life.



"hauled in through the surf, through the wreckage"

Well, we had a line ashore at last. Scotty called the captain and the others and we went to work. The small line served to send a larger ashore; and this in turn served to send two ends of a larger still, the bight of which we had rove through a block lashed to the stump of the foremast. Thus we rigged an endless fall between ship and shore.

Then we started to improvise a breeches buoy—a sling of some sort—but the people ashore had another plan to rescue us.

They got a dory somewhere, made it fast bow and stern to the endless fall, and hauled it off to us. The old man bade me get into it, but I wasn't fisherman enough to risk my life in a crazy cockle-shell like that—not until I'd seen somebody else try it first. It danced about too crazily to suit me.

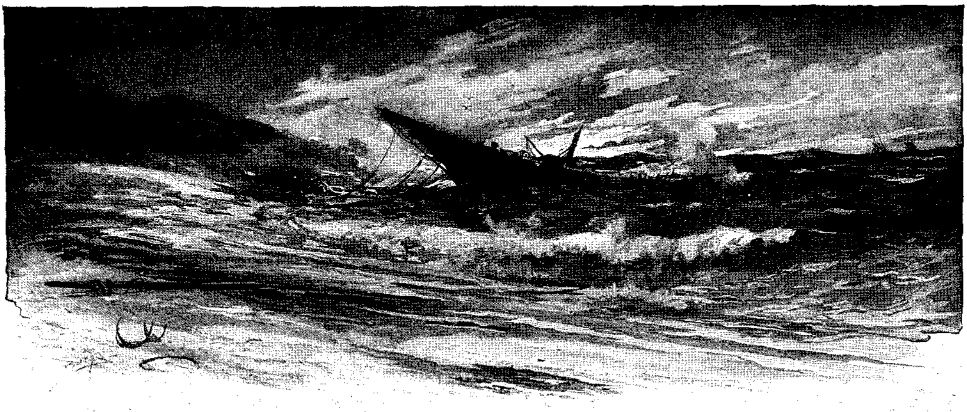
"Somebody has got to go first," shouted Scotty. "If you're scared to try it, I'm not."

So Scotty, watching his chance, jumped into the little craft, tossing, tumbling under our lee bow. In a moment he had secured himself; then the men on the beach hauled away. The little boat jumped and dived amazingly, but somehow always managed to keep on top of the seas. And presently Scotty was ashore, safe and sound. The boat bounced out to the wreck again, I boarded it, and after a wet and exciting passage reached shore. The people wanted to carry Scotty and me off and put us in dry clothes, but we said we'd stand by till the last man was out of the wreck.

The boat went back and forth, bringing man after man ashore. The ship was surely breaking up—every moment we expected to see her disappear altogether; but when it came to the cook's turn to leave her he wouldn't go. And at the last, after both mates were ashore, the old man had to fairly drive that frightened coon off the wreck.

As the captain stood alone with his command, the hull broke in two amidships, and the afterpart disappeared under a welter of foam and wreckage. The old man examined the lashing on the stump of the foremast, then calmly watched the little craft crawling off towards him. The dory seemed to pick its way among the wreckage whirling about, and presently reached the lee of the hulk. The captain jumped in and our rescuers hauled away. The boat bumped into something, tore a hole in her side, and began to fill. But she was being hauled in through the surf, through the wreckage, with a will. She hadn't time to sink before she was high and dry on the beach and the old man, half-drowned, but safe, was being lifted out of her.

And then the hospitable coast folk lifted us to their shoulders and bore us to their homes, while the savage and insatiate seas slowly broke up what was left of the old "Leo"—broke up the hulk into fire-wood, into match-wood.



IN THE ABSENCE OF RULES

AS TOLD BY RED SAUNDERS

BY

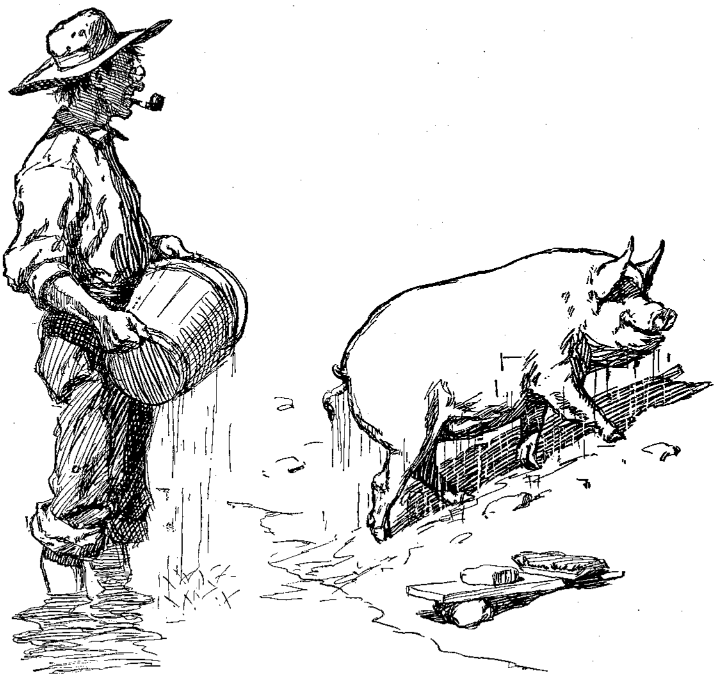
HENRY WALLACE PHILLIPS

AUTHOR OF "RED SAUNDERS: HIS ADVENTURES WEST AND EAST"

ILLUSTRATED BY A. B. FROST

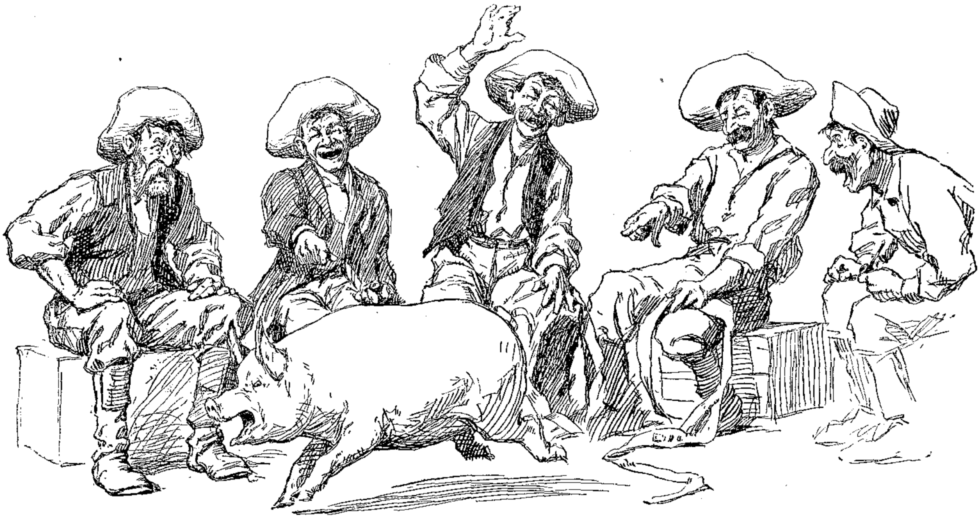
WE had a pig when we was down on the little Chantay Seeche. The Doctor begged him off a rancher, to eat up the scraps around camp. A neat person was the Doctor and a durned good cook.

We called him the Doctor because he wore specs—that's as good a claim as many has to the title. His idee was that when the pig got fat he would sell him for lots of money, but long before Foxey Bill (which was piggy) had reached the market stage money couldn't buy him. He was a great pig. My notion of hogs, previous to my acquaintance with him, was that they were dirty, stupid critters, without any respectable feelings. Perhaps it's because animals get man-like, when you associate with 'em a great deal, or perhaps Foxey Bill was an unusual proposition; but, anyhow, he was the funniest, smartest brute I ever see, and we thought a slew of him.



"Clean was no name for his personal appearance"

Clean was no name for his personal appearance. Every Sunday the Doctor took a scrub-brush and piggy down to the creek

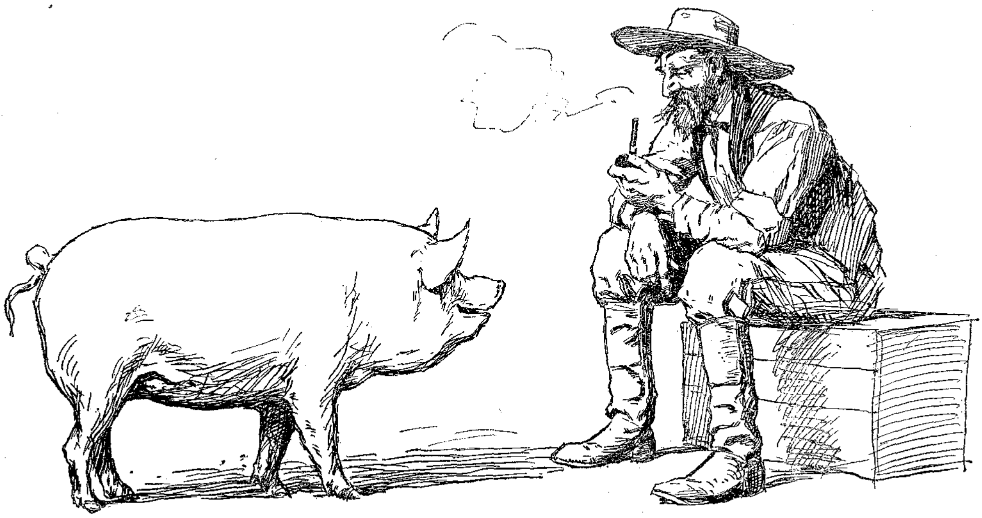


"Up gets Foxey with a shriek and gallops around the house"

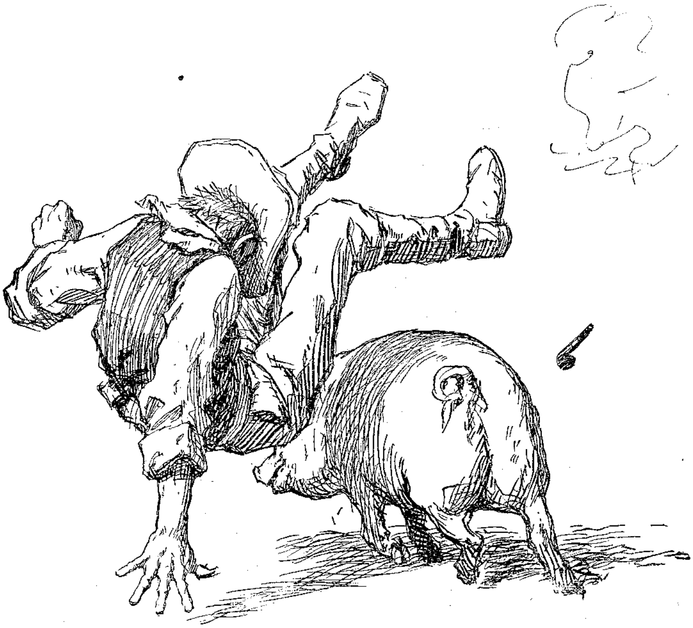
and combined 'em with the kind assistance of a cake of soap. Then Foxey just shone white as ivory, and he'd trot around in front of us, gruntin' to attract our attention, till everybody'd said, "What a beautiful, clean pig—ain't he just right?" Then he'd grunt his thanks to the company and retire behind the shack for a nap. We used to fair kill ourselves laughing at that darned pig. He had the most wheedlin' squeal, so soft and pleadin'; and he'd look up at you with them skim-milk eyes of his so pitiful, when he wanted a chunk of sugar, that you couldn't refuse him.

And knowing! Honest, he knew more'n some men. One day old Wind River was tellin' some things (that *might* have happened to him) in his usual way, bein' most careful to get the dates and all dead right, you know—"Now, *was* his name Pete, after all? Comes to my mind it was Willyam—Willyam Perkins—Well—But, anyhow, him and me, we saw that Injun," and so forth. This was a Sunday, and the gang of us sittin' in a circle, fixing leathers and one thing and another and misstatin' history faster than a horse could trot, with Foxey Bill in the middle, cocking his head from one speaker to another, takin' it all in.

At last Wind River wound up the most



"old Windy used to talk to the pig as though they'd been raised together"

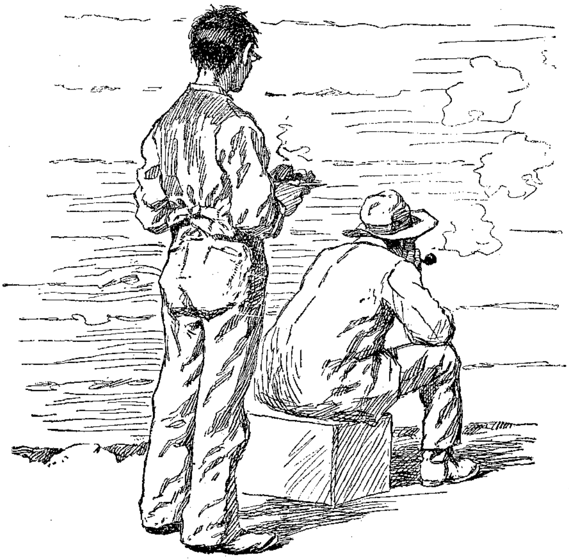


"he'd hump up his back . . . and rub against your legs"

startlin' and unlikely collections of facts he'd favored us with for some time. Up gets Foxey with a shriek and gallops around the house. Any man with the rudiments of intelligence would know he was hollerin: "Well, that's just too much for me; ta-ra-rum!"

Wind River looked scart. "Say!" says he. "Say! Thet hawg knows I'm er-lyin' jes' 's well 's I do!" After that old Windy used to talk to the pig as though they'd been raised together.

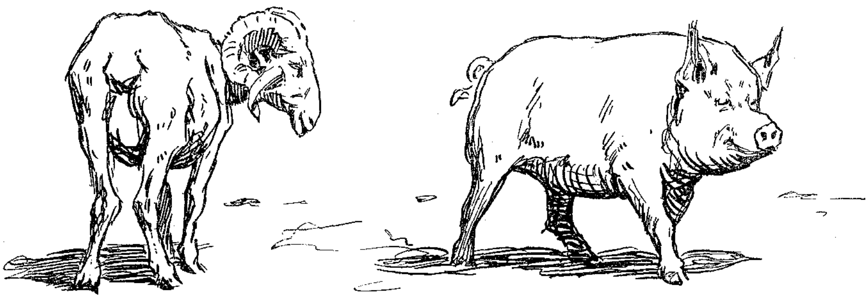
Foxey Bill made one miscalculation. He thought he was a small pet, like a cat. This didn't jibe with the five hundred pounds of meat he toted. And, like a cat, one of his principal amusements was to have his back scratched. If you didn't pay attention to him, when he squealed so pretty for you



"No. Didn't want food. Heart was broke"

to please curry him with a board, he'd hump up his back, like a cat, and rub against your legs. You instantly landed on your scalp-lock and waved the aforesaid legs in the air. Of course, when the other fellers saw this comin', they didn't feel it restin' on their conscience to call your attention to it—in fact, we sometimes busied one another talkin' to give Foxey a fair field. So Foxey had things his own way around the diggin's for some time.

Then comes bow-legged Hastings, our boss, with a ram tied hard and fast in the bottom of the wagon. He explains to us that the ram is valuable, but that he's butted merry Halifax out of everything down to home, and he don't want to shut him up, so will we please take care of him? And we said No—Wanitchee heap—we guessed not—never.



" 'Hungh!' says he, and blinked his eyes shut"

Then Hastings got mad and talked to us, flyin' his hands. Such a disobligin', stubborn, sour outfit he never saw, he said. What was the use of his bein' boss, when we just laid awake nights thinkin' up disagreeable things to do to him? Was there ever a time that he'd asked us to do this or that, that every man in reach didn't r'ar up and jump down his throat? He said he'd rather be a nigger rooster on a condemned government steamboat than bear the title of boss of such a rag-chewin', hide-bound set of mules; kick, kick, kick—nothin' but kick, and life wasn't worth livin'.

So then he went behind the shack and pouted. Well, we liked Hastings, and this made us feel bad—that's the way he worked us.

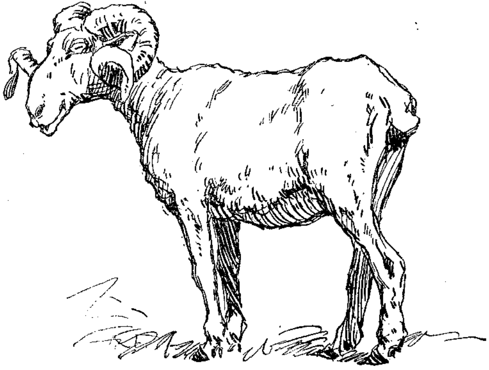
The Doctor, he fried up a dish of all-sorts in his happiest manner and took it around in a cheerful voice. No. Didn't want food. Heart was broke. So then we all went and apologized and agreed to keep the ram. Then Hastings recovered and we had that cussed sheep on our hands and feet and all over us.

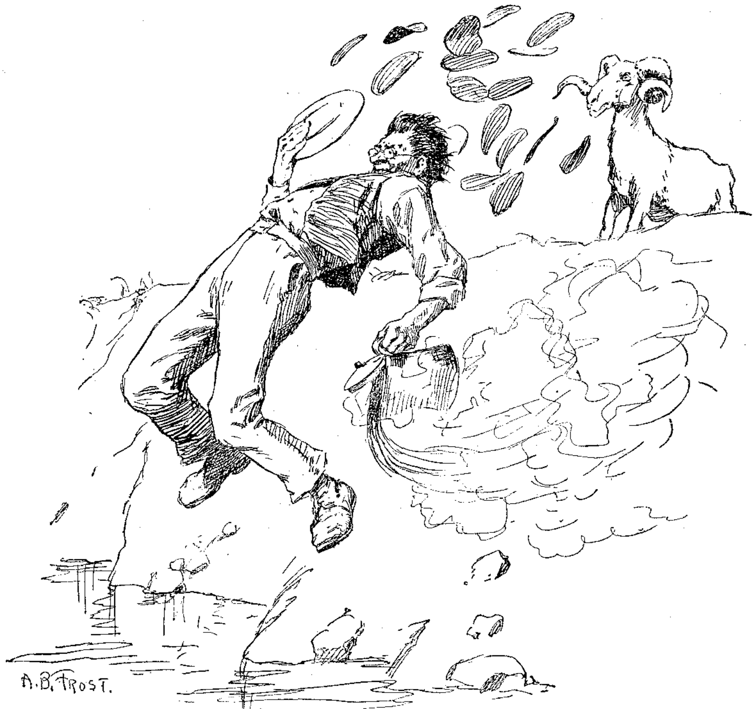
Well, it was like the devil enterin' a happy home. As for Foxey, he just took one long look at the brute, curlin' and uncurlin' his little tail; then "Hungh!" says he, and blinked his eyes shut, walkin' away from there. I've seen times when I'd liked to been able to use the English of that grunt, to thoroughly acquaint some gentleman of how little I thought of him, but I ain't got the gift of speech. It was an awful call-down—but the sheep, he didn't care. If there *was* such a thing as a foolish Sheeny, that's what a sheep would remind me of.

But the rest of us run into practical and applied trouble in its various branches. There's one night, the Doctor starts for the cabin with a mess of flap-jacks in his hands, and the sheep comes up and pushes him in the pistol pocket so that the Doctor goes sailing into the drink with a stack of brown checks hoverin' all around him.

Then Wind River shows his one tooth and rocks on his heels, hollerin' and laughin', and

"that woolly, blaatin' fool of a sheep"

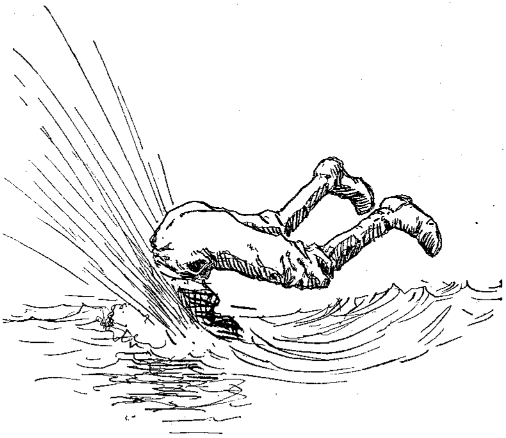




"*the Doctor goes sailing into the drink*"

the sheep rises up and smites him on the hip and thigh so he flew after the Doctor like a gray-whiskered sky-rocket, with a ha-ha! cut in two in the middle. "Woosh!" says old Windy as he comes up. "Hi, there, cooky! I'll beat you ashore!" He was a handy-witted old Orahanna, that Windy, and you didn't put the kybosh on him easy. So it went with all of us. That ram come out of no-where-at-all another night and patted me on the stummick so I pretty near fainted. I tried to twist his cussed head off his shoulders, but he'd knocked the wind out of me so it was like fightin' an army in a nightmare. I was glad when the boys come out and pried me loose. Oh, oh! How we hated that Jew-nosed, woolly, blaatin' fool of a sheep!

"*a ha ha! cut in two in the middle*"

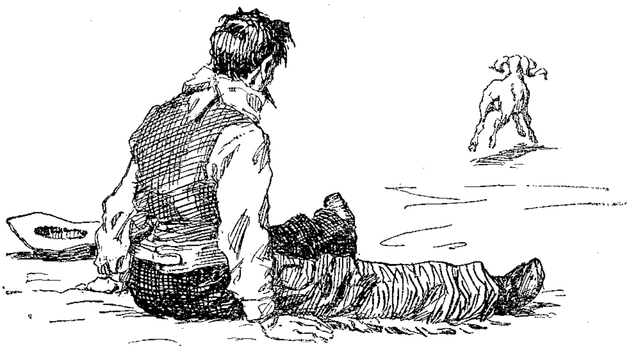


"Well," says Windy, "I'm layin' fur th' day he snaggles himself up with Foxey Bill. You're goin' to see a nice quiet sheep after that happens."

The rest of us had lots of faith in Billy, but we couldn't see where he stood a show to win.

"Shucks!" says Steve. "The sheep'll knock the bacon out of him. The Lord knows I don't want to see it, but that's what's got to happen. Poor Bill ain't onto his style of fightin' at all. You know how pigs make war—standin' side by side, tryin' to hook each other in the flank, gruntin' and circlin' around with little quick steps—how's that goin' to apply to this son-of-a-gun that hits you a welt like a domestic cannon and then chases himself off to the sky-line for another try?"

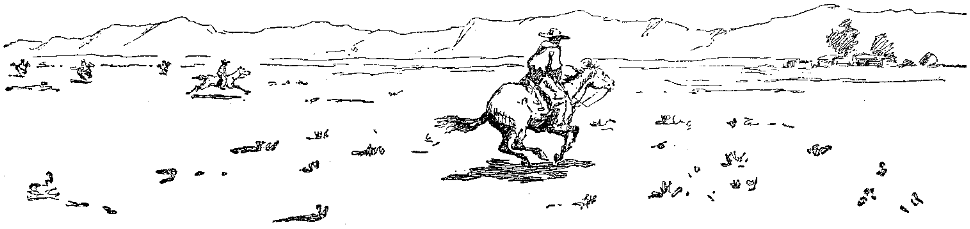
"Well," cuts in the Doctor. "I ain't



"*chases himself off to the sky-line for another try*"

a-sayin' *how*—but Bill *does* him, all the same—bet your life."

"You talk feeble minded," says Steve. "Nobody'd more like to believe you than me, but the points ain't on the cards. It'll be just like that Braddock's campaign agin the Injuns. There goes the Britishers (that's Bill) amblin' gaily through the woods, dressed up in red and marchin' arm to arm, for fear some careless Injun would miss 'em, and there's the Injuns (that's that durned ram) off in the woods jumpin' up and down with pleasure and surprise. "Oh, Jimmy!" hollers the Injun to his little boy. "Run get grandpa, Towser, mama, and the baby—everybody's goin' to pick one of these and take it home—no Injun so poor but what he's entitled to at least one Englishman."



"*we flew for home*"

"That's all right," says Windy. "But where's your Injun *now?*"

"Well," says Steve, flabbergasted, "that's kind of true, too; he has vanished some."

"I bet you money," says the Doctor, "that Bill does him."

"I hate to rob the poor in mind," says Steve. "And yet I'd like to lose that bet—make it a month's wages?"

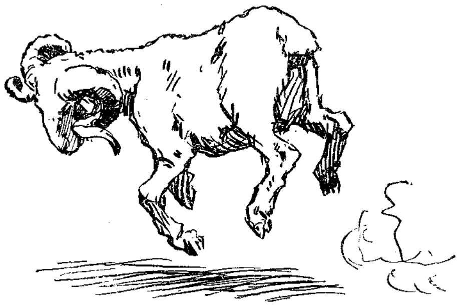
"I'm for standin' by my friends," says the Doctor. "I'll bet you up to the first of January."

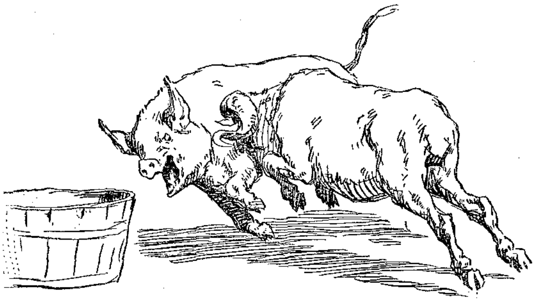
"Got you," says Steve. "You know where you can borrow chewin', anyhow. Any other gentleman want part of this?"

Steve had money he'd drew out of his poker game up-town, so the rest of us stood not to live high until after January first, if Foxey Bill didn't lick that sheep. We didn't believe he would, still he carried our money.

Well, sir, it was a tough time waitin' for the combat to come off. Bill simply despised the sheep. Couldn't stand near to him. The only time he'd stay by the house was when the sheep was off somewheres. And, of course, it was strictly against the rules for any person to aid, abet or help either warrior, or interfere in any way, shape or manner.

"*the durned ram was prancin' away*"

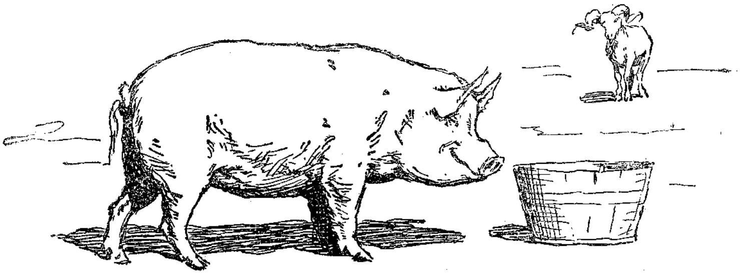




"He was knocked galley-west"

I was two mile out from camp one day, when I heard "Ke-bang, ke-bang, ke-bangety, bang-bang-bang-bang!" The Doctor was losin' off all the guns in the shack to once. I hollered to Steve, him to Windy, and then we flew for home, leavin' the calves to their own responsibilities for a while.

The other boys was on hand when we arrived, their faces shinin' with excitement, and yellin' to us for the love of Moses to shake a leg before it was too late.



"that pig looked up and smiled"

Poor Billy was pickin' himself up, after rollin' over three times, and the durned ram was prancin' away, wigglin' his tail like little boys does their fingers, with a thumb to the nose.

The Doctor explained to us, whilest we was waitin' for the next jar. "There's Bill," says he, "eatin' his meal out of his half-a-barrel as quiet and decent a citizen as you'll find anywheres. That's his grub and he don't like grass. Well, what must that quar'lsome hunk of horns and mutton do, but try to shove him away from there. Mind you, that ram *does* like grass, and he's got several hundred thousand square mile of it to lunch on—but no sir! What he must have is a hunk of bread out of Billy's barrel. Now, Billy's no hog—he let's him have the piece of bread—then the ram wants the hull barrel; hoops, staves, and all. That's too hootin' goldarn many for anybody to stand, by ninety-nine per cent., so Bill slams him one. The ram walks off and fetches him a swat like hittin' a side of beef with a fourteen-foot board. Poor old Bill rolls three yards. Then he takes after the brute, but the ram runs away as usual. Billy thinks the fight is over and goes on with his eatin'. You're just in time to see the end of the second round. Bill's *goin'* to lick him, but cuss me if I see *how.* He can't get *at* that blaatin', skippin' mess of wickedness. He don't understand at all. If the sheep would give him one fair hack, he'd show him—Look! Oh, Lordy! There he goes again! *Damn* that sheep!"

It was an awful sight for Billy's friends to witness. I'll never tell you how many times he went rollin' down the hill, only to come back as game and useless as a rooster fightin' his reflection in a lookin' glass. He'd chase after the sheep, gruntin' fierce, but pshaw! the critter'd simply trot right away from him, wigglin' that insultin' tail in his face. Old Billy's tail was coiled as tight as a watch-spring with rage.

"He'll *do* him," says the Doctor. "He sure *will!* Now you wait!"

"I am waitin'," says Steve, at the end of the twentieth round. "Waitin' and waitin'. The only play that I see Billy makin' is for the sheep to break his neck buntin' him. You hand me that rifle. I'll now bet the crowd there's a dead sheep here in five seconds by the watch. I can't stand this."

But we wouldn't let him cut in. Fair play is fair play.

"Boys," says Wind River soft, "Bill has laid his ropes—I see it in his eye!"

"G'wan!" says Steve. "You see it in your own eye!"

"Well, you watch," says Windy. "Bill and me has been pretty well acquainted ever since that day he called me a liar—look at him now!"

Sure enough, Bill was nosin' his barrel away from the house. I couldn't see the point exactly, but took it on faith.

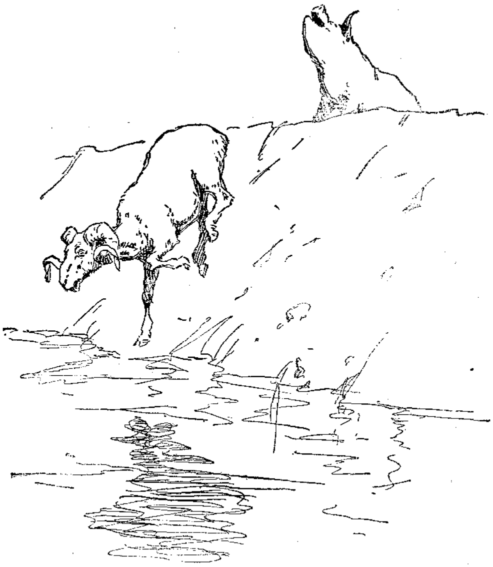
He was knocked galley-west and crooked three times before he moved the thing a rod, but whatever he had in his mind, he calmly went on with it as soon as he got up.

"Oh thunder!" says the Doctor. "See him now! Billy, you're an old fool! You'll get butted plumb into the crik, next pass!" For Bill had pushed the barrel to within five foot of the edge of the creek. And when he heard the Doctor talk, I'll take my oath, that pig looked up and smiled.

"He's got him now!" says Wind River. "He's got him now, for all my next year's salary! I see it in his face!"

And Windy was so dead sure he impressed the rest of us. So there's silence, whilest old Foxey Bill is chewin' away in the barrel, and the ram is comin' over the grass—t-r-rmt, t-r-rrmt—as hard as he can paste her, head down and eyes shut. Bill, he doesn't see anything either, until there ain't more'n three foot of air between 'em, and then he jumps aside!

"Swoosh!" goes the ram into the water, and Billy straightens out his little curly tail and waves it in the air like a flag. And *holler!* I wisht you could have heard that pig! Nothin' could been more human. "I've got the deady-deady on you, you hook-nosed, slab-sided, second cousin of a government mule!" says he. "Oh! I've got you where I want you and the way I want you, and it's up to you to convert yourself into cash at the earliest opportunity, for you won't be worth much in the market when I'm tired of my fun!" This he says as he gallops to the other side, to head the sheep off, his mild blue eye on fire. I tell you it's dangerous to rouse up a fat person with a mild blue eye.

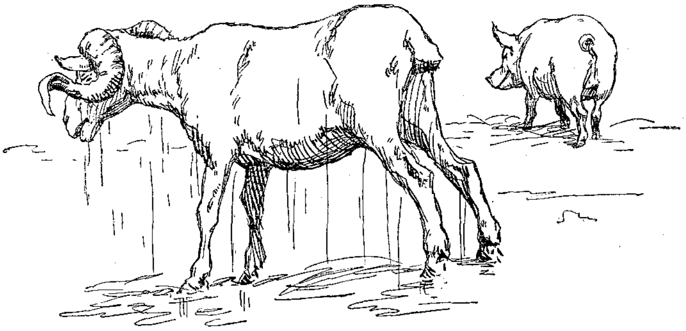

"And holler! I wisht you could have heard that pig"

A sheep don't swim much better than a mowin' machine, and this feller got desperate—he was for the shore, no matter what broke. And Bill ripped the wool out of him for fair as he tried to scramble up.

"Our fight, Steve!" says the Doctor. "I *knew* he'd do him all the time! You throw up the sponge and we'll yank the critter out!"

"Let him drown," says Steve. "I don't like him, hide nor hair—and, besides, think what he's cost me."

But that wouldn't do. Hastings would have looked so mournful, happiness couldn't get along in the same territory with him. So out comes Mr. Ram. Done. Everlastingly done. All in and the cover screwed down. We pointed our fingers at him and did a


"Done. Everlastingly done"

war-dance around him, sayin': "Agh—*hagh!* You *will*, will you? Now, don't you wish you'd been good!" He hadn't a word to say. And that good old Billy, he comes up and rubs Wind River's legs out from under him just as natural as ever, not set up or swell-headed a bit, like the gentleman he was.

The ram eat his grass and minded his own business from that time on.

THE PILGRIM BELL

BY

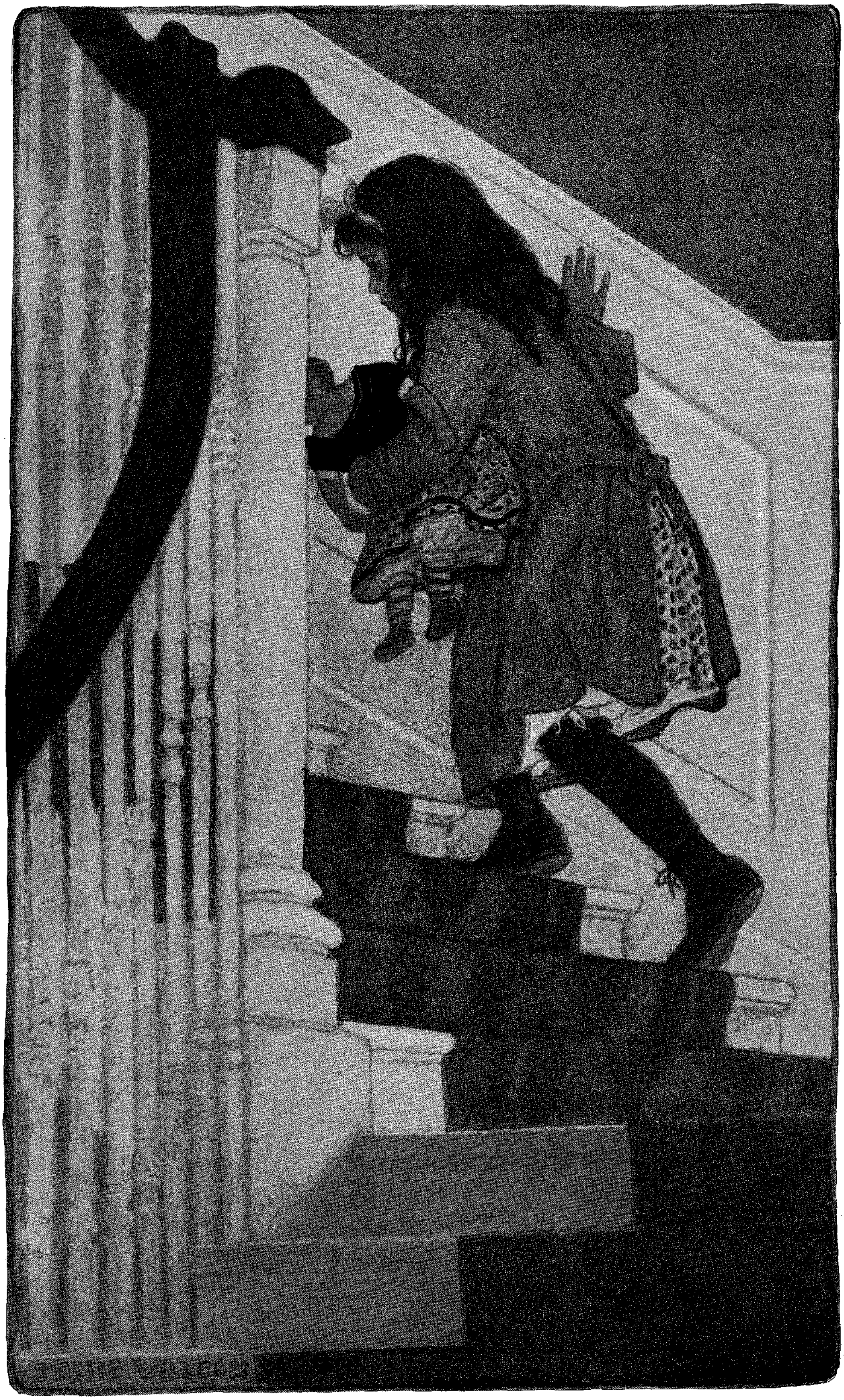
FLORENCE WILKINSON

THE pilgrim bell keeps calling me,
(Patrizio, Patrizio)
And all the folk are winding up
By that steep path and slow,
From all the little villages,
Mezzegra, Azzano,
And still the bell keeps calling me,
(Patrizio, Patrizio).

Giustina once came calling me,
(Patrizio, Patrizio)
Her eyes were dark like purple grapes,
Her small face was aglow.
"Giojetta, run away," I said,
I turned my busy wheel.
"The rich folk want their olive wood
To shine like apple-peel."
I did not even kiss her lips.
The sun is red and low.
Once more to hear that little voice!
(Patrizio, Patrizio).

Santa Maria on the hill,
You cannot succor me
Though I should climb from morn till night
To reach Mount Calvary
And pray a thousand prayers before
Thy Son upon the tree.
But still the bell keeps calling out,
(Arise, arise and go!)
If I could hear that little voice,
(Patrizio, Patrizio!)

The pilgrim bell keeps calling on,
And San Giovanni too,
But San Martino's purple rock
Yearns down into the blue.
The black boats creep from shore to shore,
From Crocione's feet
To where Tremezzo stretches out
Her plane-tree tented street.
It is Giustina's voice I hear,
Giojetta in the skies,
Giojetta, pleading, passionate;
"Dear Virgin, I arise.
Peccavi, yet there still is time;
Peccavi, well I know.
Sweet bell, you are a long-lost voice;"
(Patrizio, Patrizio).



Drawn by Jessie Willcox Smith

"She began to mount the stairs which led to the upper floors"